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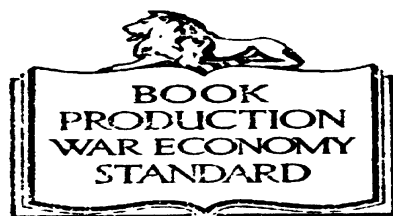
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PREFACE

THE publication of this book is a nailing of colours to the mast, the flaunting of a coat-tail in the face of theologians and philosophers, old and young. I say "old and young" because it is a gesture of middle age, of revolt against the old and of refusal to be led by the nose by the young. But to explain this I must be allowed to be briefly autobiographical.

When I was beginning my studies in Oxford in the years before 1914, philosophy was emerging from the dominance of Hegelian idealism and theology was nearing the end of a period mainly devoted to the literary and historical criticism of the Bible. The revolt against Hegelian idealism seemed to mark the end of four centuries of devotion to the study of the theory of knowledge; Cook Wilson and Prichard were recalling us to the pre-Cartesian sanity of the assumption that knowledge means knowing a thing as it is, not altering it; that unless we have some such knowledge we may as well give up thinking; and that we had better turn our attention to the external objects of possible knowledge and waste no more time doubting or trying to establish our existence as possible knowers. As for the biblical criticism, we recognised its necessity, and were grateful to those who by their labours had enabled us to read the Bible as historical source-material. But we could not share our fathers' enthusiasm for that study. We wanted *theology*, not antiquarian research, and we rejoiced to find ourselves living in an age when theologians were becoming more and more interested in the doctrinal and religious significance of the rediscovered Bible.

It began to look as though we were on the verge of a constructive period in human thought, as though the analytic process initiated by the renaissance and reformation had worked itself out, and the time for rebuilding was at hand. The mediaeval synthesis had been built on a foundation of authority, the authority of the Bible and of

Aristotle as interpreted by the Church. The Reformation had questioned the Church, the natural sciences Aristotle. The Bible had outlived both, but now that, too, had been dealt with. We had dug down to rock bottom and at last could begin to build on a firm foundation.

We did not expect or wish to be able to present the truths of Christianity either with the authority of an infallible Church or book, or with the clarity of a Cartesian demonstration. Tractarianism and fundamentalism had tried to do the former, Hegelian idealism the latter. We had seen through them all. In the revolt against Hegelianism we had recovered our grip on the truth that the Christian faith is essentially empirical and historical, that is to say, it is primarily a gospel concerning what God has done in the history of this world; its doctrines concerning the standing truths about God are those which are implied by that divine activity. This being so, we should be content with that degree of certainty of which the subject-matter admits, and the Bible, as the source-book for the history of the divine activity, had stood up to criticism and given us as much certainty as we had a right to expect. If theology would cease to demand unquestioned acceptance of a creed concerning the ultimate realities of time and eternity, and if philosophy would seek to interpret the universe in the light of those facts to which the Church bore witness, the result might be a faith more securely grounded and deserving the intellectual allegiance of mankind.

So the stage seemed set for this re-marriage of Christian revelation and philosophical enquiry, and when I left Oxford for New York in 1925 it was in full expectation that the task of a philosophically minded theologian would be to assist at the nuptials. Most of the contents of this book were written during the next ten or eleven years, either in America or after my return to Winchester in 1931. I thought of them as expressing a break with the past and the opening up of a path for the future. The chapter on authority broke with the idea that either in Bible or Church we should expect or ask for an indubitably guaranteed revelation.

The chapters on freedom broke with the Hegelian notion that the reality of this world can be judged by the standard "the real is the rational." "The Nature of Human Thought" (which, incidentally, was written long before "existential thinking" became a catchword) asserted the inevitable element of empiricism in human thought and dealt with the nature of philosophical enquiry. Then, positively, I attempted to show that a philosophy which takes the Christian revelation as its clue to the understanding of the universe can accept and assimilate, without distorting it or explaining it away, more of the empirical evidence than can any other known system.

But alas! The rosy prospects that seemed to open out before the days of my youth have faded away. The engagement has been broken off, the marriage postponed. On my return to academic life I find philosophy back in the morass of analysing its own procedure, fleeing from the contemplation of a terrifying universe to an escapist chasing of its own tail. And the younger theologians, unable apparently to receive the revealed humility of a God who wills to give Himself intellectually as well as bodily into the hands of men, claim to be the mouthpieces of a revelation which is beyond human criticism.

We of middle age cannot welcome back the things against which we revolted in our fathers in order to ingratiate ourselves with our sons. And I, for one, am not convinced that anything in Wittgenstein or Barth invalidates my claim that the principles on which the contents of this book are based are those on which thought should proceed in that realm where philosophy and theology overlap.

I am at present engaged in the writing of Croall Lectures on the doctrine of the Trinity. When they appear, they will be a further illustration of the application of these principles to the study of a particular doctrine. Meanwhile, since the remaining stocks of most of my books have been blitzed, I have revised and corrected those parts of two of them¹

¹ *Essays in Christian Philosophy* (1930) and *The Grace of God in Faith and Philosophy* (1936).

which I am still conceited enough to think of as pointing the way for philosophers and theologians alike. I am grateful to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. for allowing me to make this use of them, and to Messrs. James Nisbet & Co. for providing the mast and the hammer and the nails. It may be a pre-war coat-tail, but I am backing it to outlast many of its buttonless and pocketless successors.

L. H.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

October 1942

PART I

PRESUPPOSITIONS

CHAPTER I

FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY

I

SOME five years before the outbreak of the second great war I was staying with a Lutheran pastor in Germany, and as we walked in the country near his home our talk turned on the differences between Anglicanism and evangelical Lutheranism. He said that what he felt to be one of the chief differences could be expressed by considering the different points at which these two bodies found themselves in controversy with the Church of Rome. So far as he had been able to follow the course of discussions between Anglican and Roman writers, the arguments had seemed to be mainly concerned with questions of the Validity of Orders and of Papal Supremacy. But for Lutherans these questions had not yet risen above the horizon; they were divided from Rome by a more fundamental cleavage, through their rejection of the whole "natural philosophy," of Greek origin, which was inextricably woven into the Roman system of thought. For them the biblical revelation, pure and undefiled by any mixture of secular philosophy, was the whole source of doctrine. Divided as they were by so fundamental a cleavage, the discussion of such secondary matters as orders or papal jurisdiction would be merely a waste of time.

If this be so, then any attempt to approach theological subjects through the study of secular philosophy would seem to be no less a waste of time.

The first thing we have to do is to ask whether objection is made to all philosophy whatsoever, or whether it only applies to some particular philosophy or philosophies.

If the former be true, then indeed the case is hopeless; and it is no good denying the fact that there are theologians, and influential theologians, who appear to hold this position. I shall not attempt to consider particular instances of this, and argue *ad homines*, but to consider objectively whether the position is tenable.

That it is not tenable is shown by the fact that it cannot be maintained in practice, but only in words. What, after all, is philosophy? It comes into existence through man's desire to know the why and wherefore of things; essentially it is a quest, the pursuit of understanding. The presupposition of this activity is that everything fits into an intelligible scheme; if there were anything that did not, if the pursuit of knowledge were like the attempt to solve a cross-word puzzle when Tuesday's diagram has by accident been printed with Wednesday's clues, then the whole activity would be a waste of time. Assuming this intelligibility, those who are infected with the *bacillus philosophicus* pursue their inquiry, and it soon becomes apparent that the line which the inquiry must take is the search for some clue to the nature of that ordered system in which every event has its intelligible place. Hence come different philosophies, and schools of philosophy. Each arises when some inquirer of unusual insight grasps a principle which seems to be the key to the understanding of everything else. This principle becomes a hypothesis to be verified by the empirical study of the universe, with a view to discovering whether there be anything in heaven or earth which will not fit into the system based upon it; and each philosophical system fails when facts are encountered which cannot be assimilated without being distorted.

But such principles are not always put forward by philosophical inquirers. They are also proclaimed by prophets claiming to speak in the name of God and to be uttering the message which He has revealed to them. Prophets may be, and often are, men devoid of any philosophical interest; they may have no passion for understanding the why and wherefore of things, being filled with zeal for the honour

of God and the doing of His will. Nevertheless, when once it has been made, the prophet's proclamation inevitably becomes a matter of study for the philosophical inquirers; they have to consider whether the message thus received may not perchance give them the clue for which they have been seeking, and it can only be tested by the method already described, by asking whether it can assimilate and interpret without distorting them all the observed facts of existence.

The question before us is whether the prophetic message should submit to such testing, and my first contention is that it has never been able to avoid doing so in deed, even if it has sometimes claimed exemption in word. As Canon Quick has shown,¹ Christianity has always claimed a hearing on two grounds which at first sight appear to be contradictory, claiming to teach a revelation of God which is so extraordinary that man would never have thought of it for himself from his study of the known universe, and is also to be accepted because it fits in so well with all that is known by observation of the nature of things. This twofold claim is only superficially self-contradictory, but the point I wish to emphasise is that the advocate of the revelation inevitably finds himself making the second claim as well as the first, calling on his hearers or readers to ask themselves whether the truth of his message is not witnessed to by their own experience of life. In doing so he is inviting the test of rational inquiry, and, though at the moment he may only be inviting the consideration of the "plain man," in principle he is inviting the attention of philosophy. For the philosopher is nothing else than the inquirer who explores more thoroughly and systematically the "plain man's" questions. Whether it be maintained that no man is truly a Catholic so long as he accepts the Catholic faith because it approves itself to reason, but only if he accepts it on the ground that the Church teaches it,² or that no man is a true Lutheran unless he simply accepts

¹ *The Ground of Faith and the Chaos of Thought* (London, 1931).

² E.g. N. Wiseman: *Lectures on the Principal Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church* (London, 1888).

God's Word as a revelation which his reason is powerless to criticise,¹ Catholic and Lutheran alike deny their assertions by the arguments which they use to establish them.²

It is not likely, however, that such assertions would hold the place they do in widely different theological traditions were they merely to be dismissed as unimportant. The probability is that they bear witness to some truth of which they are an inaccurate expression. What that truth is, and what, therefore, they have to contribute, we must shortly attempt to determine. But first let us assume for a moment that it were possible to maintain them, and consider some of the consequences that would follow from doing so.

The form which these assertions sometimes take is a condemnation of man's pride in thinking by the use of his reason to measure the truth of God's self-revelation or to criticise His commands. This, it is said, results in man creating for himself an idea of God after his own image, and is not Christianity, for Christianity is the proclamation of God's own revelation of Himself. But this is the assertion of a false antithesis. The choice before man is not a choice between worshipping a god conceived after his highest ideals and the true God self-revealed: it is the choice between worshipping God conceived after his highest ideals and *some lower and less worthy object*. Whenever we abandon the duty of comparing with the best we already know whatever conception of God is put before us as claiming our worship, we are in imminent danger of falling into the superstitious worship of false gods. For example, we may be asked to exchange an ennobling reverence towards God thought of as self-sacrificing Love for an immoral and cowardly cringing before a god whose sole claim to respect is that he wields a big stick.³ Again, unless we compare whatever is enjoined upon us as being

¹ E.g. H. Sasse, *Was heisst lutherisch* (Munich, 1934), p. 32.

² E.g. Wiseman, *op. cit.*, *passim*; and Sasse, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

³ E.g. M. D. R. Willink, *The Holy and the Living God* (London, 1931), *passim*.

God's will with the highest conceptions already given to us of what is "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report," we may easily find ourselves blasphemously committing hideous enormities in the name of God. These things have been done, and it is only by an inconsistency which denies their assertions that those who deny the value of philosophy are saved from them. They unconsciously accept as integral elements in what they regard as God's uncriticised self-revelation truths which can now be taken for granted because of such criticism in the past.

For Christianity is distinguished from other religions by the fact that from the days of the prophets of Israel the criterion of the truth of God's self-revelation in the history of our faith has been its appeal to the conscience and reason of mankind.¹ With the prophetic enunciation of the principle that faith in God means trusting the Almighty to support one in doing what one honestly believes to be right, the religion of Israel was lifted out of the worship of a *mysterium tremendum* whose ways are so inscrutable that the only way to discover its will is by casting lots, having a dream at a sanctuary, or persuading a wizard to peep and mutter. Herein lay the secret of its future development, herein lies its claim to be the universal religion. However inadequate at any stage may be man's knowledge of what is right and what is wrong, to those who honestly follow

¹ See further below, Chapter VIII, p. 140. It may be objected that no passages can be quoted to show that this is what the prophets regarded themselves as doing, whilst many passages show that they thought quite otherwise. Doubtless this is so, but it does not affect the truth of my statement. In biblical interpretation there are three stages: (i) establishment of the true text and accurate translation; (ii) historical exegesis of the text to reveal the meaning intended by the author at the time of writing; (iii) reflection on the exegesis with a view to discovering its significance for our understanding of God's revelation. The first and second stages are the necessary foundations of the third, and no interpretation can be accepted which requires as its basis a corrupt text, a faulty translation, or a false exegesis. But in the third stage our interest is not so much in what the prophets thought they were doing as in what they really were doing, and in passage after passage they were clearly appealing to the consciences of their hearers —e.g. 1 Sam. xii. 1-6; Amos ii. 6-8, vi. 1-6; Micah vi. 7-8; Isa. v. 8-24; Jer. vii. 1-15.

the light they have, God will give fuller illumination. So in the fullness of time God came on earth as Righteous Love incarnate, to win allegiance over the hearts and minds of men by presenting them with a manifestation of Himself which should appeal to their deepest and highest intuitions of what is truly worshipful.

To prepare them for the recognition of Himself in His self-revelation, God's Spirit quickens men's minds, and educates them in that knowledge of what things are indeed "true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." To refuse to see the working of the Holy Spirit in all such education, whether within or without the borders of Israel, whether in Greek philosophy or Indian thought, is to commit the sin for which there is no forgiveness. There is a constant refrain running through the old Testament, which tells of God, when Israel was faithless, raising up the surrounding nations to be His agents in recalling His people to their allegiance. If God could use the Ammonites, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians to scourge His chosen people into the paths of obedience, may He not also use the honest labours of secular scientists and philosophers to lead His Church out of controversial deadlocks towards the unity which is His will for it?

If we try to discover the ground of this untenable disparagement of secular thought, we find that it is rooted in two fundamental doctrines, the creaturehood of man, and the Fall. The Anglican theologian, trained in the Platonic ways of thought which are traditional in our communion,¹ finds himself in a strange world when first he enters the realm of either Catholic or Lutheran scholasticism. When he is told, for example, that the question of the right relation between Church and State depends for its solution on recognition of the fundamental principle that the State belongs to the order of creation and the Church to the order of redemption, he is at a loss to grasp the significance of the distinction. He is no more familiar with a scheme of clear-

¹ See C. C. J. Webb, *A Century of Anglican Theology* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 4 ff.

cut distinctions between orders of creation, preservation and redemption than he is with those between states of potency and actuality. He is, however, familiar with the question whether the Incarnation was wholly a consequence of the Fall, or whether, had there been no sin, it would have been, without the Cross, the mode of creation's consummation—a line of thought associated with the Greek Fathers, and in modern times with the honoured name of Bishop Westcott. For our immediate purpose the question at issue is whether the fact that man is not only a creature but a sinful creature means that he is entirely devoid of any rational understanding whereby he may distinguish between the claims of rival statements which profess to embody divine revelation. In the terms of Catholic scholasticism, this is the question whether the image of God has been entirely obliterated in man by the Fall; in the terms of Protestant scholasticism, whether man's reason is an element of the divine order of preservation whereby fallen creation is maintained in being while it awaits its redemption.

It is important to realise that this is a question which does not divide Protestant from Catholic or church from church, but one on which opinions differ within each of the main divisions of Christendom. As we have seen, Professor Sasse, from the Lutheran standpoint, proclaims the total incapacity of human reason:¹ but when the Continuation Committee of the World Conference met in 1934, this point of view was expressed by Dr. Visser 't Hooft of the Reformed tradition, and refuted by both the Lutheran Professor Jundt and the Presbyterian Professor Manson. I conclude, therefore, that in arguing for the usefulness of philosophy to theology I am not arguing for catholicism against protestantism, or for Calvinists against Lutherans, or for any one church or group of churches against any other. I am advocating a view which is held in every one of the great communions of Christendom. From time to time, in this communion or that, it

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 31 ff.

has to fight to maintain its foothold against some recurring wave of obscurantism; but we need not waver in our faith as to the ultimate issue. *Magna est veritas et praevalet.*

To the arguments already put forward, one more may here be added. It often happens that the dispute is not between one view which claims to be the expression of divine revelation, and another which comes forward as the product of human reason, but between two views both of which claim to embody divine revelation. When this is so, of what use is it to assert that man's duty is to accept God's revelation with uncritical acquiescence? Here are two rival voices, each crying "Thus saith the Lord," and how is one to know to which to hearken? In days gone by attempts have been made to decide such issues by the use of pincers, rack and stake. If we are not to fall back on such methods, what other recourse have we? Are we to acquiesce in the travesty of a Christendom divided, proclaiming our faith 'in a Church which is one, holy and catholic while our deeds belie our words? Or are we to sentimentalise about a unity which is built on the shifting sands of a toleration so shallow-minded as to imply that it does not matter what men believe and that truth is a matter of no concern? It is surely more in accord with all that our faith teaches us of God to believe that He calls us away from all such miserable makeshifts to the honest exercise of our minds, that it is His will to submit his revelation to the arbitrament of our reason.

It is on no lesser ground than this that we must take our stand. Were we to base it on any other foundation, the claim that man, that sinful creature, should so far forget his creaturehood and sinfulness as to use his reason to criticise his Maker's revelation, would indeed be pride and blasphemy. But who can accept the biblical revelation of God without learning that from the dawn of history He has been urging man to this activity? The God whom we worship is the God who speaks to us through His prophets, saying "Come now, and let us reason together";¹ He is the God

¹ Isa. i. 18.

who comes on earth incarnate to put Himself into the hands of men and wait upon their response, whose criticism of them is to say "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"¹ In the eyes of God it is not humility but hypocrisy which girds up the loins of the mind to philosophise about astronomy and physics and other so-called secular subjects but refuses to honour His revelation by giving it similar attention.

II

So much for the legitimacy in theology of philosophy in general. The question still remains whether some particular philosophies may not be inconsistent with the profession of the Christian faith. This question must be faced, and it will require a somewhat fuller consideration of what philosophy is; but the time will not be wasted, for it is in this discussion that we shall discover the truth which gives colour to the theological attacks on philosophy in general.

We have seen that philosophy has two main characteristics: (1) It is an attempt to understand the why and wherefore of things, in which the philosopher explores more thoroughly and systematically the plain man's questions; (2) it inevitably becomes an attempt to find the key to unlock the secret of the unified system of reality, that secret which in principle contains the explanation of *everything*, since to explain anything is to show how it fits into an intelligible system of which it is a part. We must now examine both of these characteristics rather more carefully.

(1) The attempt to explore the plain man's questions more thoroughly and systematically inevitably leads to what is called "abstract" thought, a thing much misunderstood and a bugbear to many. In order to grasp its nature,

¹ Matt. xvi. 3.

consider first the contrast between a novel and a psychological treatise. The novelist attempts to make his creatures live, to be individuals in whose lives his readers will take a personal interest. The more their behaviour is psychologically credible, the better his novel will be; but its psychological truth must be expressed in and through the living experiences of the characters, not expressly formulated as "laws" of human behaviour. But the purpose of the writer of a treatise on psychology is to ignore the flesh-and-blood concreteness of Tom, Dick and Harry as individuals, and to try to discover and state what are the common habits of human beings of which instances appear in the behaviour of different individuals.

Consider, again, mathematics. The plain man and his wife, desiring to paper the walls of a room, are interested in the pattern and colouring; they ask how a particular paper will suit some particular room, how well it will wear, and whether they can afford it. But in the sums we learned to do at school, we worked in terms of a and b and x and y , and discovered the amount and cost of the paper required for any room of a given size, paying no attention to its shape or aspect or architectural character.

The thinking of the psychologist and of the mathematician is "abstract" in the strict sense in that it abstracts and attends to certain aspects of concrete actuality. Similarly the philosopher, in seeking for some intelligible principle which shall give meaning to the universe, both in its parts and as a whole, is continually studying underlying principles in abstraction from the particular events which express them. Like all special studies, this requires a special aptitude and training of the mind, in order to develop certain characteristics, of which two are of outstanding importance.

(i) The abstract principles with which the philosopher works, and the relations between them, are as objectively real and definite as any other objects of thought, as, for example, the "brute facts" of the "plain man," or the quantitative units of the mathematician. Consequently, just as the study of mathematics requires power both to

understand the meaning of mathematical symbols and the modes of their interrelations, and to grasp complicated systems of them with insight into their significance; so the study of philosophy requires power to understand the meaning of philosophical principles and the modes of their interrelations, and to grasp complicated systems of them with insight into their significance.

It is want of appreciation of this truth which leads to the phrase "abstract thought" suggesting a field of vague speculation in which anyone can imagine what he likes. Thus Professor Eddington, in the concluding section of his Gifford Lectures, looks back over the philosophical part of his work and says: ". . . I have felt a homesickness for the paths of physical science where there are more or less discernible handrails to keep us from the worst morasses of foolishness."¹ It is as though a pianist were to say that whereas on the piano one has to keep to the set notes, on a violin anyone can make up whatever notes he likes. Perhaps one may; but with a violin one can excruciate the ear more horribly than with a piano, and mathematicians or others who venture into the field of philosophy without a respect for the behaviour of philosophical principles equal to that which they give to the factors in mathematical equations are apt to appear excruciatingly funny to the professional philosophers.²

(ii) The value of all this abstraction is that it is a kind of shorthand thinking. It enables the mathematician to solve the problems of an indefinite number of wall-paperings in one equation; it enables the psychologist to write a treatise interpreting the behaviour of an indefinite number of characters in fiction and real life; it enables the philosopher to grasp the significance of an indefinite number of events. But since in every case the starting-point is the interaction of particular, concrete events, the underlying principles

¹ A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (Cambridge, 1929), p. 343.

² See, e.g., the review of Eddington's book by H. W. B. Joseph in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xxvii, No. 3 (April 1929).

of which are being sought for, the abstract thinking needs continual testing by reference to actual events. Here there is an important difference between the study of mathematics and such studies as psychology, theology, and philosophy. The quantitative aspect of events, which is isolated and studied in mathematics, can be treated in complete isolation more fruitfully than can the psychological, theological or philosophical principles. The mathematician can devote himself entirely to studying the behaviour of his symbols of quantity. But the psychologist, the theologian and the philosopher must train themselves in the power of visualising as they go along what their reasonings will mean if translated into terms of actual life.

For want of this power some psychologists, theologians and philosophers construct theories which are apparently logical but actually absurd. And for want of this power many readers of their works never really understand what they read; indeed, it may truly be said that often they have never really read at all the books they think they have. A man who comes across a page of mathematical calculations either knows enough mathematics to work carefully through it, or else knows that he has skipped it; but the same man will skim over the words of an abstract philosophical argument without ever grasping its meaning in terms of actual life, and will conclude that it is all much ado about nothing in a world of vague and unreal "abstractions."

This is why a good sermon will ordinarily be more akin to a good novel than to a psychological, philosophical or theological treatise.

Thus philosophy, regarded as the attempt to explore more thoroughly and systematically the plain man's questions, requires a trained capacity to grasp the inter-relations of the principles underlying the events of actual life, and at every step to test its reasonings by visualising their implications for actual life.

(2) Inevitably this attempt becomes the quest for some

governing principle which will act as a clue to the understanding of the whole system of things. We have seen that if the plain man's temptation is to ignore the importance of accurate philosophical thinking because he is only at home in the world of actual life, that life which is portrayed by the historian and the novelist, the philosopher's temptation is to forget it, to live in his world of abstractions, and to distort his view of actual life by trying to make it conform to what according to his reasonings it ought to be. But this is to forget that from the start the philosophical quest was the quest for an interpretation of this actual world and of the life we live in it, so that no system of philosophy can suffice which has to distort or explain away the facts which it sets out to interpret.

Why should we ever be tempted to do this? It is, I believe, because the human mind is so made that it demands order, cosmos, while this world is largely disorderly, chaotic. Hence, whenever our minds lay hold of an orderly system, they tend to reverence it, and to treat it as more real because more orderly. An interesting illustration of this is the fascination exercised over our minds by scientific "laws." Consider, for example, how easily we slip into a habit of depersonalising human activities and "explaining" them as instances of psychological or physiological "laws," to speak as though what appear to be a man's own decisions and purposive acts are *really* effects of the interaction of "inhibitions" and "complexes" and other similar abstractions which we regard as more real than human volition as commonly understood because we have arranged them to our own satisfaction in an orderly system of cause and effect.¹ Similarly, the attraction of both materialism and idealism for the human mind is due to their being systems more orderly in behaviour than the chaotic interplay of human minds and wills in actual life.

By a curious coincidence, the same nineteenth century which saw this "scientific" materialism obtain so powerful a sway over the human mind, saw also the development

¹ See below, Chapter IX, p. 165.

of a realisation of the importance of history.¹ Inevitably the attempt has been and is being made to interpret history itself as a manifestation in and through human life of "more real" economic, materialistic or ideological "laws." But I wish to contend that, in so far as such attempts explain away the characteristic uniqueness of history as the interaction of conscious, purposive human wills, they themselves manifest the surrender of the human mind to the besetting temptation of philosophy. For what distinguishes history both from the natural sciences on the one hand and from metaphysics on the other is that it is concerned directly neither with the "laws" of the physical universe, nor with the principles of rational coherence in an ideal realm, but with the purposive striving of men and women who are not to be explained away either as instances of the former or as manifestations of the latter.

The recognition of the importance of history implies that, no matter what earlier phases this space-time universe may have passed through in the course of its evolution, the duty of philosophy is to account for and interpret a world in which the most significant feature is conscious, purposive, personal life. If the personal relations in history are not to be explained away as *epiphenomena* in a more real physical universe, so neither are they to be treated as partial manifestations of a more real impersonal absolute. It is, I believe, because philosophy so often succumbs to one or other of these temptations that it is so often distrusted by religion; this is, I believe, the ground of its repudiation by Lutheran and other theologians, the truth which gives colour to their attacks on philosophy in general.

III

In contrast with this philosophical quest for the understanding of all things, Christian faith is the acceptance of certain historical events as "acts of God." In the centre

¹ Cp. C. C. J. Webb, *Religious Thought in England from 1850*, pp. 18 ff.; W. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, p. 13.

stands Jesus Christ, God incarnate, whose conception, birth, life, death and resurrection are acts of God within the history of this world. They are not merely typical events which reveal the nature of God and His grace: they are the gracious God Himself in action, redeeming man from evil and bringing him forgiveness.¹

To Christian faith, then, God is known primarily in His redeeming activity in Christ. But this very fact prevents us stopping there. If God has thus willed to enter within history and within it to work our salvation, that must be for believing Christians our clue to understanding all human history and all the evolution of the universe in which human history has its place. Thus inevitably there arises *Christian philosophy*, that philosophy which is the attempt to interpret the meaning of all things in the light of God's self-revelation in Christ. Immediately it becomes clear that we can set no bounds to the area which the rays of this light can penetrate, and which our philosophical minds must seek to interpret by their aid. Enlightened by them the eye of Christian faith will see all history and all evolution as God's creation redeemed by Him in Jesus Christ. We shall not set in opposition God as Creator and God as Redeemer. Nor shall we assert that because God is known *directly* to us in history only as Redeemer therefore we know nothing of Him in any other relation. The fact that God has willed to reveal Himself to us as Redeemer in the way in which He has done implies that He wants to be known and loved by His creatures. For that revelation was no act of compulsion enforcing upon men a conformity to divine commands in which no part was played by the response of human minds and hearts. The Gospel story is the story of God putting Himself into the hands of men and waiting upon their response. When that response took the form of rejection and crucifixion, then supremely He revealed His omnipotence by making crucifixion itself a means of winning the free response of human

¹ Cp. G. Kittel on "The Jesus of History" in Bell and Deissmann, *Mysterium Christi* (London, 1930).

hearts and wills and minds. Some of the problems raised by this will engage our attention later on; for the moment it is enough to note that the acceptance by Christian faith of God's self-revelation in Christ as Redeemer is not a prohibition of Christian philosophising but an invitation to it.

And if we cannot set in opposition God as Creator and God as Redeemer, so neither can we divide His redeemed creation into two opposed "orders," an order of creation opposed to an order of redemption. We are members of one creation, God's redeemed creation. By willing to reveal Himself in and through history, God has invested all history with a significance which as Christians we cannot ignore. God can be fully known to us only in and through Christ; but Christ, being an historical figure, can be fully known to us only through the fullest and most accurate knowledge of the universe within whose history He has taken His place. We cannot therefore ignore the light which the history of this world, both before and after the time of His incarnation, sheds upon that central figure. For this reason Christian faith, just because it is *Christian* faith and accepts history as the medium of divine revelation, will be expectant that the development of human study in so-called secular subjects may be able to give us aid towards understanding its own convictions. So our long course of argument brings us round to the conclusion that, just because we are believing Christians whose starting-point is the acceptance by faith of God's redemptive work in Christ, therefore we must be ready and willing to look for help in the interpretation of our religious convictions from the labours of God's servants the philosophers and scientists of to-day.

The Christian will not argue that because he has faith he needs no philosophy. Faith itself must philosophise, and in doing so it will not ignore or despise either the methods of philosophical inquiry or the discipline of learning to think accurately according to its canons. But it will use them with an insight enabling it to philosophise to such good effect as to beat the philosophy of non-faith at its own game.

It must and will refuse to accept as satisfactory any philosophy for which the personal relations between God and man in Christ are explained as appearances of an ultimately impersonal reality; in contrast with all such it will develop its own philosophy, taking as its key to the understanding of all things this revelation of the living God in Christ. But in thus developing its own philosophy it will not be too proud to learn what it can from those who from other starting-points have set out to wrestle with the same problems.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF HUMAN THOUGHT

I

A FEW years ago an able student in one of our English theological colleges complained that, whenever he went to ask members of the staff about his intellectual difficulties, he always received the same reply: "Yes, that is a very interesting question. . . . It is a very difficult question. . . . Suppose we go and pray about it." A few years later, across the Atlantic Ocean and as far farther as it takes to enter the realms of fiction, one Elmer Gantry at a Baptist seminary was similarly baffled by being told to take his difficulties to the Lord in prayer. It is clear that in both cases prayer was regarded (at any rate by the student) as an evasive substitute for thinking. But what is thinking? And how does it differ from praying? How do two men sitting down and discussing a problem over their pipes differ from those same two men kneeling to pray about it?

If prayer is to be used as an evasive substitute for thinking, it must be with one of two ends in view: Either (*a*) the result of praying must be to divert attention from a troublesome problem, so that the thinker ceases to be interested in it, or (*b*) prayer must be a method of discovering the solution of a problem by which one may steal a march on those who follow the ordinary processes of thought. Neither of these notions is tenable, but the second of them may be used as the starting-point of our inquiry. In order to discuss it we must first ask what are the "ordinary processes of thinking" which the prayer is to beat at their own game.

There would be no thinking if there were nothing to think about, and there would be no point in thinking if there were nothing worth while thinking about. It is the object of the thought which determines the value of the thinking, and, in any purely intellectual quest, what we

aim at is an apprehension of reality as it is. When two persons unite in such a quest, their aim is to share in apprehending a common object. Each will see it from his own point of view, but unless there be a common "it"—unless, indeed, there be an "it" which is not only common but recognisably common—their quest is a waste of time. Thinking is not a mental process carried on in abstraction from reality, which may or may not be "logical," for "logic" is in things before it is in human thought, and thinking is logical when it accurately apprehends what it thinks about. The thinker's aim is to know, and our processes of thinking are our ways of learning. Behind each one of us there is a long spatio-temporal history issuing in a unique being learning to know from his own point of view. Our mental vision is imperfect, but improving, and by combined effort in argument and discussion we can help to clear away the scales from one another's eyes. Thus we become the sort of people who can see what we could not see before.

That human life is a process of becoming the sort of people that we were not before is a truth too often overlooked in considering our mental activity. Let us imagine a man standing on a station platform. As a train comes in, he says "Here's a stopping train." "How do you know?" asks his companion. "By the single lamp in front of the funnel," he replies. Now, once upon a time he has undoubtedly learned that that single lamp means a stopping train, and has had to go through a process of thinking of the type: "Here is a single lamp high up; a single lamp high up means a stopping train; therefore this is a stopping train." But he has now got beyond that stage. He is the sort of man who can recognise a stopping train, and if a companion asks him how he knows it, he unrolls from the latter end the process by which he learned it: "How do I know that this is a stopping train? I know that this is a stopping train because it has a single lamp in that position, and that means a stopping train."

There are doubtless some people who would suggest that as the train comes into the station his "unconscious"

once again goes through the process by which he has learned to recognise stopping trains, and communicates the result to "his conscious mind." The suggestion is an imaginary elaboration of events in an unverifiable field, based on the premise that whenever a truth has been learned through a process of inference, it can never afterwards be recognised except by a repetition of the process. On what grounds this premise rests, I am unable to discover; it goes beyond the evidence and is inherently absurd. The evidence shows that what we have learned by inference we can recognise directly, and there is an inherent absurdity in a theory which involves our maintaining that whenever a man meets his wife he recognises her by a process of inference.

Moreover, the evidence of our experience shows that the process of inference is itself built up of a series of direct observations. The friend who first initiated us into the mysteries of railway headlights did so by sharing with us his knowledge of three interconnected facts forming a complex whole. We had to learn them *seriatim* in the process of our development; but having learned them we become the sort of man who can recognise stopping trains at sight, and we have no need to repeat the process of learning except for the purpose of instructing someone else. If the facts are there to be learned, and we are capable of learning them, then by doing so we become what we were not before. I do not see that we can get behind this statement; we must take it as our starting-point in trying to understand human thinking. In the spatio-temporal process human beings are creatures capable of learning what they did not know before, and by so doing they develop themselves into being what they were not before. The hypothesis of "unconscious inference," and the theory of pre-natal memory in Plato's "Meno," seem to be parallel attempts to get behind this starting-point, both rendered unnecessary by "taking time seriously" and recognising man's place in the process of creation.

Trains and wives are clearly objects about which we think. We may apprehend them rightly or wrongly, but we can

only do so in virtue of their prior existence as material for apprehension. The same is true of the meaning of the single lamp on the train. It is not an object of sense-perception; it may rightly be included among what some thinkers call "the imponderables," for such a meaning has no weight or other quality measurable by the use of scientific instruments. The same, again, is true of every argument or statement put forward in this book. They are parts of my thinking, but only in the sense that they are the nature of reality as apprehended or misapprehended by me. If they are misapprehensions, there is only one way in which they can be corrected: I must learn more, so as to apprehend more clearly. This may come through having my eyes opened by some reader whose clearer apprehension enables him to show me what I have not seen.

Objectivity, the El Dorado of philosophers, is, in every direction of human inquiry, sought by faith rather than demonstrably exhibited as already found. In all our apprehensions up to date the element of subjective misapprehension is so inextricably intertwined with what is true that it is always easy for the epistemological sceptic to make out a plausible case for the denial of all objectivity in human thought. But still men go on seeking, discussing, and arguing, for we are human in virtue of our faith that there is something to be found, and we cannot cease to behave like human beings. In theism the act of faith which inspires all human thinking becomes aware of its own nature, and devotion to "the as yet partially apprehended objective" believes itself to be devotion to God revealing Himself through His creation and in the personal intercourse of religion.

When, therefore, two men sit down together to think out a problem, they are brother learners trying to discover more of the common reality which both desire to know. It may be that the past history of each has led to two such different points of view that in their present condition there is a violent clash of opinions, and the discussion proceeds by way of furious argument. But what gives point to the

argument is the underlying faith that sooner or later they will be able to apprehend the common object of their search, and to see how it has come about that they have entertained such different notions of it.

If the theist be right in his conviction that God reveals Himself both in the objective order of reality as discovered by human thought, and also in the personal intercourse of religion, then to seek communion with God in prayer need not be an evasion of the duty of thinking. But neither should it be regarded as a substitute for it. For him the duty of thinking is grounded in the conviction that it is God's will that he should learn by mental seeking, and the unquenchable faith which drives men onwards in the search is a seed sown by God in His creation of man, evidence of the divine intention that he should think. It is a common experience of teachers to have to withhold information which might be given to pupils, in order that they may "make it their own" by finding it out for themselves, and the wise pupil will not try to evade his duty by cajoling his master into doing his work for him. Similarly the wise Christian will not try to evade his duty of thinking by turning to prayer. The knowledge of God gained by personal intercourse may, indeed, help him by illuminating his problems, and sharpening his wits; but it will only do so if what he asks for is help to do his work better, and not an excuse for abandoning the task.

The advice to pray may be either a recommendation to take steps towards girding up the loins of the mind, or a mistaken counsel to seek to evade the doing of God's will. Which of these two it is can only be determined in each particular case as it arises. If it be the former, it is the best advice that can be given; if the latter, the worst. The latter is a kind of caricature of the former, the degradation of prayer into an instrument not for doing, but for thwarting God's will. Which it actually was in the two cases mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is not in question here. If the critical English student and Mr. Sinclair Lewis were right in suspecting the worst, they were right, too, in their scorn

of it. But the scorn was deserved for a reason they did not give. It was deserved because they were each confronted with a case of *corruptio optimi pessima*.

II

It is a curious truth that profound belief in objectivity often appears at first sight indistinguishable from reliance on the highest degree of subjectivity in thinking. It is worth while to observe how this comes about. If the aim of our thought is to apprehend objective reality, then the end of every search must be an act of apprehension. The only way in which one explorer can communicate what he has found to another is by describing it, or pointing it out. To use Professor Dewey's term, his method is denotative. "This," he says in effect, "is the truth as I see it; cannot you see it for yourself?" If the other man can and does so see it, then all is well. But if not, then how is his friend to convince him that what he described is indeed the truth and not his erroneous misconception of it, seeing that the word "truth" must always be qualified by the phrase "as I see it"?

It may be, of course, that he is wrong. But let us assume for the sake of argument that he is right. What can he do? The objectivity in which he believes includes the relations whereby all the elements of reality are linked together in a complex intelligible whole. A "logical" argument is a progressive series of apprehensions of truly existent relations. The whole network of relations is so complex, and the problems involved in trying to apprehend them are so confusing, that it is often extremely difficult, if not beyond our powers, to select and observe accurately those relevant to a particular inquiry. But there is no other way of proceeding, and when two explorers disagree, what they have to do is to find some common starting-point from which they may again set out on the voyage of discovery. To go back to our problem. If a man has rightly apprehended the nature of x , but cannot bring his friend to see it, then his next step will be to say "At any rate you agree with me

as to the nature of a ; then can't you see that if a is such, b must be so and so?" and so on. At any point in the journey from a to x there may be disagreement, and it may be necessary to turn aside and unravel that. The process is apparently endless, and life is all too short for an individual to experience the unravelling of more than a few disagreements. Moreover, we continue to grow in our awareness of the complexity of the problems before us—as witness those presented by investigations in the worlds of physics and astro-physics. In philosophy, perfect work waits upon patience.

There is always the appearance of subjectivity because every statement, true or false, is a pointing out of "the truth *as I see it*." There is no criterion of general application whereby we may eliminate the element of subjectivity, and thus distinguish the true from the false. There are many expedients which can be used as guide-posts in our journeys of discovery; nearly every branch of study develops its own canons in the course of its work, and a general sense of direction is provided by our faith in an all-pervasive rationality which forbids us to rest content with unresolved contradictions. But in the last resort, discovery of the truth can only be said to come by acts of apprehension, through a kind of insight which is inexplicable in terms of anything else, but familiar to every human being through his own experience of it. A man may not be able to apprehend the solution of the problems to which an Einstein applies himself, but he can tell a penny stamp from a halfpenny one, and recognise his wife in a crowd.

As a result of these facts, the inquirer has often to face two difficulties, which need to be understood. In the first place, our desire for objective certainty tempts us to allow the wish to become the father to the thought, and to believe that we can achieve some infallibility free from the limitations of subjective apprehension. Because it is easy to forget that every argument is a series of such apprehensions, each subject to the same limitation, it is easy to imagine that a lengthy argument gives a greater guarantee of objectivity than a

single act of apprehension. This danger is at its greatest when we are dealing with certain elements in reality which are indefinable in terms of anything other than themselves, such as freedom, obligation, and that power of apprehension which is the subject of our present inquiry. It is often easier to make a plausible argument explaining away these realities, and describing them as something other than their true selves, than to win conviction by leading a man consciously to apprehend them as they actually exist in his experience. It seems weak to go on reiterating "This is so; cannot you see it?" in the face of apparently profound and learned arguments showing deep insight into the nature of almost every subject except the one under discussion. In such a case, all that can be done is to bring negative criticism to bear on the proposed substitutes for freedom or obligation, or whatever else it may be that is in dispute, showing that the suggested theory breaks down when applied to some experience admittedly apprehended alike by both parties to the inquiry, and that somewhere in the course of the argument by which it has been maintained there is a step which can only be justified by a reiteration similar to one's own. When this has been done, one's own reiteration does not sound so weak as before.

The second difficulty arising out of the reduction of all argument to the statement of subjective apprehensions is this. If this is all that can be done, we may feel, why should we prefer one man's statement to another? If all argument is of the nature of the street urchin's form of controversy, a repetition *ad nauseam* of "'Tis!" and "'Tisn't!" what is the use of arguing at all? All we have are differing subjective opinions, any one of which is as likely to be true as another.

But there is an element of perverseness in this scepticism which betokens a radical weakness in philosophical education. It is perhaps natural for the student of philosophy to pass through a stage in which the interest of view-tasting temporarily obscures that passionate desire for the truth which gives birth to the true philosopher. To allow the student to become fixed at this stage, and to produce view-tasters

rather than genuine seekers for truth, is, in the field of philosophical education, the *corruptio optimi pessima* which needs to be most carefully guarded against. The view-taster may be a promising student, but it is the mark of maturity to have passed beyond that stage, and to be once again a devotee of truth. To adapt the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he that will come to the knowledge of reality must believe that reality is, and generously rewards those who earnestly seek it¹.

Given this devotion and this faith, a man begins to discover that he will be foolish if he refuses to acknowledge that the insight of all men is not equally valuable on every subject. He will admit that as a general rule a medical training makes a man more likely to diagnose correctly a case of sickness, and a mathematical training to solve a problem in mathematics. He will not think so poorly of the achievements of the human race as to deny that we have garnered some wisdom which may be of use to us in future inquiries. In the end he will conclude that the aim of education should be not so much the imparting of information already acquired, as the development of a pupil into the kind of man whose insight into the problems of his field of study is acute and trustworthy.

If this be so, then the bedrock on which we always have to fall back in our quest for knowledge is the insight of men specially qualified to deal with the kind of problem under discussion. When this fails, and "doctors differ," there is no external court of appeal; there is nothing to do but to gird up the loins of the mind for further patient seeking.

Our best achievements in the quest of knowledge are the records of their apprehensions made by men whose insight has led them aright; our worst are the utterances of those whose vision has led them astray—and there is no distinction of form whereby we can tell the one from the other. So far as the form of the statement is concerned, each is a dogmatic assertion of "the truth as I see it." Nevertheless, the one is the truth apprehended by man's only method of grasping

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

it, and the other is a caricature of it; the one is the *optimum* in the use of our intellects, and the other its *pessima corruptio*. It is not by changing our method of thinking, but by changing ourselves so that we employ better the one and only method, that we may avoid error and discover truth. There is not one "logical method of thinking" which leads to truth, and another "illogical method of thinking" which leads to error; the same method which in its perfection finds truth in its corruption brings error.

So in writing this book I can only attempt to state as honestly and clearly as possible "the truth as I see it," and appeal to my readers to join in the inquiry, asking them over and over again, "Cannot you see it for yourself?" The only stipulation I can make is that my critics shall join in the task as devotees of truth, and not as view-tasters. Then by their criticism they will be able to help me to overcome the deficiencies of my own vision, and to revise my views where revision is required. For what I need is to become the kind of man who can see better than I see now, and we can all help each other to transform ourselves, and to set forward the progress of human knowledge. Meanwhile I continue to believe that the pursuit of philosophy will be helped and not hindered by combining with the habit of hard and accurate thinking the habit of "taking it to the Lord in prayer"; and I hope that the grounds of this belief are sufficiently obvious from what I have already written.

CHAPTER III

THE OUTLOOK OF PHILOSOPHY

I

SCIENCE and philosophy alike begin in wonder, and they represent different stages of a continuous process through which the mind is driven on by the pressure of its curiosity. Anything may serve to provoke this curiosity: the sight of an apple falling, for example, or a disease of which the exact nature and cause are unknown. Whatever the event may be, the attempt to understand it begins by trying to see how it is connected with its immediate surroundings in time and space; the circle widens, and in the last resort it must be seen in relation to everything else that is, has been or will be. Then comes the last question of all: the question why this whole system should be what it is and as it is.

Sometimes the scientific inquiry has been said to be distinguished from the philosophical by the fact that the one asks the question "How?" and the other "Why?" But this is misleading, because in common speech the word "Why?" is ambiguous. It may be used when asking either for a scientific explanation of an event in terms of its habitual relations to other events, or for a philosophical explanation in terms of "meaning." Moreover, this manner of drawing the distinction might seem to suggest that the inquirer, faced by the event about which he is curious, has before him the choice between two divergent lines of inquiry. The results of thus rending the universe in twain, into a scientific world of inquiry and a philosophical, are disastrous. It encourages scientists to believe in the possibility of a scientific explanation of facts as parallel to and in competition with the philosophical; it encourages philosophers to ignore the necessity of patient scientific investigation, and of testing their conclusions by asking whether

they explain the actual universe as analysed by the scientists' labours.

These confusions and errors are avoided if we regard the two inquiries as successive stages in a single quest. First comes the scientific inquiry, the attempt to grasp just how events happen as matters of fact, and the habitual relationships between different events. It is impossible to draw the line to mark precisely where this passes over into the philosophical inquiry, that inquiry which seeks to grasp the meaning of the system of events as a whole. As colours shade into one another in the spectrum, as child grows into boy and boy into man, so science passes over into philosophy.

On the subjective side there is a difference between the scientific and the philosophical interest. The truly scientific interest would seem to be essentially aesthetic in character—that is to say, it seeks its satisfaction in the contemplation of fact simply as fact. The more events that can be observed as falling into their places in a correlated system, the greater the satisfaction. But when the observer becomes discontented with this attitude of simple contemplation, and begins to ask what it all means, he has been bitten by the *bacillus philosophicus* and embarks on the philosophical inquiry.

Twice over I have used the word "meaning" in connection with the philosophical quest. This at once raises the questions: "What is meant by 'meaning'?" and "Meaning for whom?" Consideration of them enables us to understand how it is that what has been called "the great tradition" in philosophy finds itself driven into idealism. Science and philosophy alike are engaged in the quest of objectivity. They are seeking, that is, to divest the mind of its illusions, to escape from the temptation to let the wish be the father to the thought, and to contemplate reality undistorted by the observer's subjective peculiarities. What is the ultimate goal of this inquiry? This or that event may be accepted as objectively real because our empirical observation of it is confirmed by our seeing how it fits in with other events into a coherent and rational system.

But what of the system as a whole? There must be some end to the process of explaining everything by reference to its relation to something else.

The end of the search must be the acknowledgment of reality as being just what it is, as objectively given, as brute fact. But is this the end? Shall we not still ask, Why should this brute fact be what it is? There is only one way in which this question can be satisfactorily answered. Only if reality be such as to justify its own existence by its goodness shall we cease to ask why it should exist and be what it is. It must be a self-authenticating reality. So long as it remains simply "brute fact," we may choose between defying it or cowering before it. In either case, it is unintelligible. Only the good is truly intelligible, for only the good is self-authenticating in the sense that it justifies its own existence by needing no further explanation of it by reference to something else. Only if our long quest for understanding of the universe can end in an object before which we bow in reverence and worship can the first step in any scientific inquiry be justified.

Thus in the long run it is impossible to divorce judgments of fact from judgments of value. Only where fact and value coincide can either be accepted as finally intelligible and, in the full sense of the words, objectively real.

In the history of thought we see this argument develop. The Ionian philosophers of the sixth century B.C. saw that for anything to be intelligible reality must be a coherent system, and they sought for the principle of its unity in the physical elements. Anaxagoras grasped the truth that matter, taken by itself, is not intelligible. A materialistic universe, taken by itself, may have to be accepted as brute fact, but it cannot be understood. There must be intelligence in that which is intelligible. Plato took the further step of asserting that only goodness is intrinsically intelligible, so that goodness alone is ultimately real, and all things are real only in so far as they participate in it. The criteria of reality are logical consistency (which is the criterion of fact) and self-justifying goodness (which is the

criterion of value). Not one or other is required, but both at once. This is "idealism" in the sense that only what fulfils the ideal of being at once logically consistent and self-justifying as good can be accepted as real.

Thus was born the "great tradition" in philosophy, a tradition with as much life in it to-day as in that past age when it came into being, a philosophy with as good a claim as any to be regarded as *philosophia perennis*. If one doubts the validity of the argument as it developed from the Ionians to Plato, what one has to do is to think it through again, not as an historical series of opinions, but as a timeless necessity of thought—as I have just been trying to do. I confess myself unable to find a flaw in the argument, and therefore driven to the conclusion that it holds good, and that the "great tradition" stands firm.

So far, so good. But at this point, just when he is drawing his breath at the conclusion of his argument, the philosopher finds that he is only at the beginning of his most serious troubles. He has been driven to assert that existent goodness is the only true reality. Moreover, this which is the truly real has to be thought of as eternal and unchanging in its perfection. But what status, then, is to be given to the flux of events in this spatio-temporal universe of ours? Much that apparently exists will satisfy the criterion neither of logical consistency nor of self-justifying goodness. What is to be said of all this? The philosophical inquiry inevitably develops into a hypothetical clue to the understanding of the universe, and when that stage is reached, the next step is to test the hypothesis by asking how far it can interpret the actual universe without distorting it or explaining it away. To this test the "great tradition" must now be submitted. No matter how much we may feel that it stands secure when tested by the criterion of its own logical self-consistency, it must also face the test of its relevance to the actual history of this spatio-temporal world.

At first sight there would seem to be two possible alternatives. Either we can hold fast to our conclusion that

perfect goodness is the only true reality, and speak of this spatio-temporal universe either as illusory, or as a mode of appearance of the perfect reality. Or we can abandon our conclusion on the ground that it fails to meet the second test, assert the reality of the spatio-temporal world of events as brute fact, and confine our attention to observing, recording and manipulating it while dismissing as profitless speculation all attempts to grasp its ultimate significance. Historically, philosophy swings like a pendulum between these two extremes, over-exclusive emphasis on the one always provoking a reassertion of the other. Within our own lifetime many of us have seen an instance of this. Bergson's philosophy of the *élan vital*, James's pragmatism and Dewey's instrumentalism are but three indications of a common movement of thought challenging the position of unquestioned dominance accorded to Hegelian idealism in the days of our youth.

In the thought of ancient Greece, the pendulum was set a-swinging. On this fundamental issue Plato and Aristotle were at one. It is a mistake to think of Plato and Aristotle as representing two opposite poles of philosophic thought. Aristotle regarded Plato as his master from whom he differed on certain points within their far more fundamental agreement. Both stood for that "great tradition" of which I have spoken. The real cleavage lies between them on the one side, and those who are sometimes called the 'atomists' on the other, between the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition and that which can be traced from Democritus of Abdera to Epicurus and Zeno. It is the cleavage between those who cannot desist from the search for an intelligible meaning in the nature of things as a whole, and those who are more concerned with discovering a *modus vivendi* in the world of our immediate experience. But a point to be noticed is that the greatest thinkers are those who are never able to rid their minds of a certain uneasiness concerning that side of the truth which their systematic thought is tempted to ignore. Plato, for all his criticism of the world of sense-perception by the criteria of logical consistency and self-

justifying goodness, can never be content simply to dismiss it as unreal. The exact mode whereby the things of sense participate in the reality of the ideas is a standing problem of Platonic exegesis—perhaps because it was a question on which Plato himself was never able to make up his mind. Aristotle, in spite of his Platonism and his teleological interpretation of the universe, demanded of himself and others a rigorous exactitude in the observation of actual facts, and left in his writings many an unresolved contradiction between theory and observation. Both Plato and Aristotle regarded it as the duty of the philosopher to play his full part in the affairs of earthly life. It was their lesser followers who one-sidedly developed a lofty unconcern with the things of this world. Epicurus and Zeno, similarly, realised the necessity of grounding their ethics in a comprehensive philosophical theory of the nature of reality; it was the sophists who dismissed such efforts as profitless speculations.

Philosophy, then, is the constant endeavour to complete the work of science and relate the actual world of scientific investigation to the ideal world of self-consistent, self-justifying goodness. It must never forget that it is rooted in the actual space-time universe which it is seeking to understand, that it is bad philosophy which denies, distorts, or explains away any of the data to which it owes its existence. *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*

II

The demand of the mind for a reality which shall satisfy the criteria of self-consistency and self-justification is itself one of the facts to be taken into account by philosophy. It is one of those facts which recur no matter how often we try to pitchfork them away.¹ This recurrence keeps

¹ The very existence of, *e.g.*, Dewey's instrumentalism bears witness to this truth, in that it is a summons to mankind to accommodate itself to a world patient of scientific study (*i.e.* logically self-consistent) in order to mould it in accordance with what the mind will accept as providing a good life (*i.e.* self-justifying).

alive the "great tradition" as a *philosophia perennis*, and thus establishes itself as an especially significant fact for the understanding of everything. At this point, therefore, I wish to introduce the point that facts differ in the degree of their significance for the understanding of the nature of things. What I mean by this may be seen by a simple illustration. You may know a certain amount about a man by observing his ordinary everyday activities, but if on some occasion you see him face to face with a crisis which draws out all his powers of body and mind to wrestle with it, you realise that this activity has given you a far deeper understanding of him than anything you had observed before. It is an activity especially significant for your understanding of him as contrasted with his routine behaviour.

We have now to reckon with religion as among the facts which philosophy has to attempt to interpret, and to ask how far it provides facts which must be recognised as of especial significance. I am going to confine myself to those religions which fall within Professor Hocking's definition of religion as "a conversation of the self with reality as an assertion of kinship with the controlling energies of the world,"¹ and to take as my starting-point the following quotation from Professor Webb: "It is, I think, in principle true from the start that what men have sought in religion is always communication with that which is supposed or suspected to possess within itself the secret of our life and of our surroundings, and therefore to exert over us and them a mysterious power which we shall do well to enlist upon our side. Wherever this hidden power may be conjectured by primitive men to reside—in whatever queer-shaped stone, or totem animal, or initiated wizard, or vanished founder of their tribal customs—it is dislodged from one abiding place after another as knowledge is increased and the horizon of the worshippers' interests widens, and at last we discover that it is after all nothing less than the ultimate Reality wherein 'we live and move

¹ In an address given at Princeton, reported in the *New York Times*, March 6, 1926, p. 15.

and have our being' that we are inquiring; this which we have been seeking throughout."¹

Philosophy begins with questioning, seeking to understand the meaning of particular events. But the language natural to religion is assertive, declaring the meaning of events in the light of knowledge gained by revelation. By word and deed the seer and the prophet, the medicine-man and the priest make assertions declaring the significance of events and actions.

In the early centuries of our era the philosophy of the time had to reckon with Christianity, and found in it a religion which asserted as the content of its revelation a knowledge of God which was comprehensive, precise and detailed. It was comprehensive in that it was knowledge of the one and only God, the maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible; it was precise in that it did not consist of general statements concerning the nature of the Divine Being, but of particular divine acts within the field of history; it was detailed, for it told the story of God calling His chosen people, rescuing them out of Egypt, giving them His Law, settling them in Palestine, guiding their national destinies, sending them prophets, redeeming them through the incarnation, death and resurrection of His Son, and by the gift of His Spirit adopting them to share in the sonship of their risen Lord, and thus by incorporation in the body of Christ destroying their national exclusiveness and constituting them the nucleus of a universal brotherhood.

Contact between philosophy and the Church was inevitable from the first. Philosophy could only be true to itself by pressing onwards in its unremitting search for the meaning of any and every event within the universe, seeking by its own criteria to distinguish between subjective illusion and objective reality. It could not ignore the assertions of the Christian Church that the ultimate reality was the God who had revealed Himself through the Hebrew prophets and in Christ. The Church could only be true to itself

¹ C. C. J. Webb, *God and Personality* (London, 1918), p. 138.

by striving without exception to draw into its brotherhood all sorts and conditions of men, including the philosophers; and when challenged concerning the truth of its alleged knowledge of God had perforce to submit to the test of philosophic criticism and to engage in philosophy itself.¹ If philosophy had professed a lofty unconcern with the sayings and doings of these ignorant and unlettered men, it would have failed to assimilate the most significant events in the history of its own times, succumbing to the worst temptation of its own "great tradition." If the Church had turned a deaf ear to the questionings of philosophy and contented itself with preaching a gospel which it refused to submit to criticism, it would have lost its right to speak in the name of Him who is the truth as well as the way and the life.

Happily these temptations were resisted on both sides, and there ensued a marriage of Christianity and philosophy, to the great advantage of both. The Church gained a fuller realisation of all that was implied in its Gospel, finding itself to be possessed of a message which was the key to the understanding of all human life everywhere. What philosophy gained needs rather more explanation.

We have seen that the history of philosophy is the history of a series of attempts to systematise the material given by actual experience through the criteria of logical self-consistency and and self-justifying goodness. Each philosophical system is the expression of such an attempt; it performs a useful function so long as it is seeking to assimilate its material without distorting it or explaining it away, but it has outworn its usefulness when it is taken as perfect and self-sufficient and by prescribing what can happen prevents the observation of what does happen. At the beginning of our era philosophy had reached one of its periodical positions of stalemate. On the one hand, the great tradition was hardening into a dogmatic assertion of the sole reality of the eternal and unchanging; on the other, Epicureans

¹ On this see my *Place of Reason in Christian Apologetic* (Oxford and New York, 1925), pp. 31 ff.

and Stoics were concentrating on discovering a practical *modus vivendi* for citizens of an unintelligible world.

If philosophy was to survive, some new impetus was needed to kindle afresh the spirit of inquiry and feed it upon the hope of being able to make progress in the advance of knowledge. The great tradition needed to have thrust upon its attention some new deliverances of actual experience, demanding to be thought about. The purveyors of advice needed to be reminded that ethics must always be grounded in some positive conception of ultimate reality. Somehow or other philosophy had to be recalled to its duty of seeking to reconcile the ideal and the actual, and saved from the sterility which ensues upon any divorce between the partisans of either side. This task was performed by Christianity. The growing influence of a body of men and women following a way of life grounded in beliefs about God could be ignored by neither side with impunity, and in attempting to think out the implications of this new faith philosophy was reborn into a further life of usefulness.

This point can be fully appreciated only when it is realised that the development of European thought from its first contact with Christianity to what is called the "mediaeval synthesis" must be studied as a whole, as forming one unbroken chapter in the history of philosophy. There were two phases in this movement of thought. First came the breaking up of the existent situation of stalemate by the irruption of the new material, and then the reconstruction of the new synthesis. In the first phase, which occupied roughly the first six centuries, the "age of the Councils," the initiative was taken by the Christian believers. They were engaged in resisting all attempts on the part of the learned world to distort or explain away their assertions. Consider, for example, the Trinitarian and Christological controversies which issued in the formulation of the *Quicumque Vult* and the Chalcedonian Definition. Left to itself, the "great tradition" in philosophy could develop into nothing more fruitful than the barren sterility of Neoplatonism, with its conception of ultimate reality as

a unity in which all distinctions are lost, to embrace which the soul must escape from all contact and entanglement with this world of time and space and sense-perception. But the Christians insisted that the learned world should reckon with a faith which asserted that the ultimate reality was the living God who had revealed Himself as essentially and eternally triune in His unity, who had revealed Himself embodied in an actual historical life subject to the conditions of time and space and sense-perception and had thereby redeemed the material to be the vehicle and instrument of the spiritual. These were indigestible assertions, beyond the assimilative powers of the philosophy of the time. All that could be done was to assert them in a series of contradictions and anathematise those who should deny any of them.

Anathemas are the religious language for the philosophical statement that any philosophy which ignores, distorts, or explains away any of the given facts in the problem has failed in its task, and in the second phase of this movement of thought we see philosophy quickened to a new appetite by having this indigestible material to wrestle with, and achieving a new synthesis in the great mediaeval system of thought of which St. Thomas Aquinas was the leading exponent. In him the great tradition reasserted itself, enriched and deepened by its acceptance of the Christian revelation as something to be neither denied nor distorted nor explained away but interpreted.

III

A philosophical system, we have seen, is fruitful and useful so long as it is struggling to reconcile the actual and the ideal, to achieve an intelligible interpretation of the results of observation of actual life in the light of the criteria of logical self-consistency and self-justifying goodness. But a philosophical system has outworn its usefulness when it becomes hardened into an orthodoxy which by prescribing what can happen prevents the observation of

what does happen. Then it needs to be broken up, and revived by having fresh indigestible material thrust into it. When philosophy refuses to submit to this treatment, and to endeavour to wrestle with the new material, interest swings away into other channels, and for the time being the main stream of philosophical development is checked.

The movement of thought initiated by the coming of Christianity itself reached this stage after the formulation of the mediaeval synthesis, but this time it received no immediate reinvigoration by the injection of new material. There followed instead the diversion of interest into other channels. Nevertheless, this diversion was the beginning of another two-phase movement of thought. The first phase has been the independent following of these other channels, through which the new material was prepared for injection into the body of philosophy, and we are now at the stage of passing over from the first phase to the second, at the opening of an era of constructive thought in which philosophy must wrestle with the material accumulated during the last four centuries and press forward to find a temporary resting-place in a new synthesis.

The channels into which thought was diverted were three. The Reformation marked a renewed insistence on the importance of attending to the Christian gospel as a religious message which makes demands upon human life. The pursuit of scientific inquiry called men to patient and accurate observation and recording of events in the natural world. And the Cartesian revolution diverted what continued to be regarded as specifically philosophical inquiry to exclusive concern with the problem of knowledge. Our concern in this lecture is with these last two, and the noteworthy feature of the history of scientific and philosophical thought in the period from which we are emerging is the mutual independence of the two lines of inquiry. From Descartes to Kant philosophers were mainly engaged in disputing whether the world of sense-perception really exists as the object of our experience. Meanwhile the scientists were

continuing to study it, neither perturbed by the conclusions of those philosophers who denied the existence of their material nor grateful to those who affirmed it, but indifferent to both. On the whole the great tradition maintained its position as the dominant influence in philosophy. When shaken by Hume and Mill, it recovered its balance through Kant and Hegel and T. H. Green, and in British thought found powerful exponents in such writers as F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet.

I have already mentioned the revolt against the dominance of this school in which Bergson, William James, and John Dewey have played a leading part; but already we see the great tradition reasserting itself in such thinkers as Professors Whitehead and Urban and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is the present-day trend of these discussions which leads one to hold that we are passing from the critical to the constructive phase of the movement of thought, for they represent the emergence of philosophy from its preoccupation with the problem of knowledge, and the growing interest of science and philosophy with one another. The period of independent activity in which each was concerned exclusively with its own concerns is passing. The scientists are philosophising, and the philosophers wrestling with the problems presented by the results of scientific inquiry.

The world which philosophy to-day has to seek to interpret in the light of its criteria of logical self-consistency and self-justifying goodness is the world as observed by scientific investigation. How does this differ from the world as envisaged by the philosophers of antiquity and of the mediaeval synthesis? In what way have the centuries of independent scientific devotion to its own work provided fresh material with which philosophy must reckon? I will call your attention to three leading points.

(1) The word "evolution" first became a familiar household word through the work of Charles Darwin, when it was used in biological science to describe a certain theory of the development of life on this planet. It has now won its way into other sciences, and from a correlation of the results of

studies in astronomy and molecular physics it has become a probability that this whole spatio-temporal universe is "evolving." By the use of this word I do not mean to advocate any particular theory of the relation between one stage of the development of the universe and another: I simply mean to assert the view that the spatio-temporal universe as a whole is a one-way process. It is not a static system within which changes occur, but is itself in process of change. To quote what I have written elsewhere: "Nineteenth-century scientific thought was dominated by a conception of the universe as, so to speak, a vast container filled with a definite amount of space, in which material atoms moved hither and thither, combining to form bodies which exchanged with one another different shares in a constant total supply of energy. Whatever might happen through these combinations and exchanges within the system, the enduring reality was the system itself which did not change. Thus time was of no importance in scientific calculations, and evolution itself was a transient phenomenon of no ultimate significance. But the outlook of the twentieth century is different. Evolution has come into its own. The universe is at bottom not a container of space in which matter and energy play their parts; the universe is the time-history of energy, which knots itself up into material things that have increasing complexity of structure as the process goes on."¹

(2) With this change of view concerning the nature of the spatio-temporal universe has come the necessity of revising what is meant by scientific "laws." On the old view these could be regarded as statements of the timeless uniformities in accordance with which the exchanges of energy took place within the timeless system of the whole. But with the realisation that the time factor is involved in the very being of the universe itself, so that the same cause or combination of causes never occurs more than once, such a statement as that "the same cause or combination of causes always produces the same effect" has become, if not unmeaning, at any rate irrelevant. To say what conception of

¹ *Eugenics* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1933), p. 12.

“law” is now generally accepted is impossible: the question is under discussion.

(3) Conscious mind, such as we know it in human experience, first appears at a comparatively late date in the time-history of this process which is the universe. It appears first as a quality of certain of the material things into which the fundamental energy has got itself knotted up. Certain knots, of a specific degree and order of complexity, discover themselves to be aware of their own existence and of their compresence with the other knots, and discover also that they have a certain limited power of control over the further development of themselves and the universe from which they spring and to which they belong. They appear, I repeat, as new factors at a comparatively late stage of the universal history.

Each of these three points provides problems with which the constructive philosophy of to-day has to wrestle.

(1) That the ultimate reality, the ideal perfection in the light of which everything actual is to be judged, cannot itself be in process of becoming has always been clearly grasped by the great tradition, and the arguments on which this conviction is based are as sound and compelling as when they were first apprehended. Because of this, the peculiar difficulty of the great tradition has always been the conceiving of the relation between the ideal and the actual, and its critics have always felt that it did not sufficiently recognise the obstinate, given reality of the world of change and development. The enlargement of the sphere of historical process to include the whole being of the spatio-temporal universe as studied by astronomy and molecular physics may not have introduced any new question of philosophical principle, but it has stimulated the imagination to a fresh realisation of the difficulty of the problem, and produced an impatience with the would-be solutions of the past. We can no longer be content with the ancient notion of successive cycles, or the thought of the universe as the sphere of self-manifestation of a timeless absolute. Those of us who cannot deny the main positive contentions

of the great tradition find ourselves driven by the work of such thinkers as Bergson and Alexander to reconsider the whole problem.

(2) As I have already said, the question of the nature of scientific judgments is a matter of much discussion. The abandonment of the notion of the universe as a timeless system of uniformities within which same causes produce same effects has produced uncertainty about the object of scientific study and the meaning of its results. It is no longer true that scientists pursue their studies assuming in happy innocence that they are investigating the "real" world, without caring whether the course of philosophic thought veers towards subjective idealism or epistemological realism. The scientists themselves are philosophising about their work, and characteristic of this period in which we live are the scepticism of Bertrand Russell about causation,¹ and such theories as that science merely deals with statistical averages, and collects from its computations not a knowledge of reality but only the results of the mathematical problems it has set itself to work out—a line of thought which makes scientists themselves into subjective idealists. There are even some who are ready to play with the notion of a "principle of indeterminacy" at the heart of the physical universe, though others see clearly that this is to cut at the very roots of scientific endeavour.² Once again, then, there is doubt concerning the question whether our thinking is really interpreting the actual given world of our experience without distorting it or explaining it away; once again we must gird up our loins for renewed zeal in the philosophic quest.

(3) The realisation that, in the order of history, human thought comes into existence as a function of certain products of the universal process raises anew the problem of the status of man in the universe and of the validity of his

¹ See, e.g., *Mysticism and Logic* (London, 1918), IX; *The Analysis of Mind* (London, 1921), V.

² See Max Planck, *Where is Science Going?* (English translation, London, 1933.)

judgments. Human beings are apparently the by-product of a meaningless cosmic process, somehow or other endowed with a capacity to feel and think. Somehow or other they have got into their heads the notion that they can grasp eternal truths, appreciate intrinsic values, and influence the history of the universe by actions which make it better or worse. But when we consider their origin and status in the universe, such claims appear to be no more than hollow pretensions. All human thought seems to be infected with relativism; it is no more than the calculations possible to minds observing their environments along their own perspectives. Philosophers of the great tradition may claim to judge reality by the criteria of logical consistency and self-justifying goodness, but what is their criterion of consistency except the vain imagining of atomistic observers, and what is their criterion of goodness except "an attempt, however disguised, to give legislative force to our own wishes"?¹

The philosopher of the great tradition is apt to reply that there is nothing new in these questions; in principle they have been asked and answered many times. "The main facts of the dependence of mind on body were as much in Plato's mind as they can be in ours. The materialistic view of the universe and also the naturalistic or epiphenomenal view of mind were as rampant in the Athens of his day as they have been lately in our modern West. . . . Plato, then, was fully aware of the case that could be made for such a view of mind, but he was also aware of another set of facts that seemed to him to put this view entirely out of court."²

Doubtless this is true. Yet the ordinary man of to-day remains unconvinced and perplexed. It is all very well, he feels, for the philosopher to tell him that his questions are in principle the same as those which were asked and answered long ago. But that is just the point on which he wants further assurance. The philosopher says they are

¹ B. Russell, *Mysticism and Logic* (London and New York, 1918), p. 108. See also the same writer's *Analysis of Mind* (1921), *passim*.

² J. Baillie, *And the Life Everlasting* (London, 1934), p. 91.

“in principle” the same. Such a phrase arouses the ordinary man’s suspicion; he does not know precisely what the words mean, and suspects that they have been slipped in for some evasive purpose. If the questions are the same, why not simply say “the same”? Why “*in principle* the same”?

I am inclined to think that this dissatisfaction is rooted in a feeling that the adoption of an evolutionary outlook on the universe cannot have left such questions as these entirely unaffected, that it must have created a new situation in which they must be asked and argued out anew. The ordinary, non-philosophical man suspects, that is, that some of the material offered to philosophy by scientific investigation may be more indigestible than philosophy cares to admit, and when he is told that it has been digested “in principle” he wonders whether philosophy might not be in a healthier condition if it were more painfully aware of certain unasimilated lumps in its system.

And are there not two points on which he is right?

(i) The evolutionary outlook implies that order in time is a factor of essential significance for the interpretation of the universe. The true picture of the actual universe is a history of a one-way process, so that the order in which events occur does make a difference to their meaning. A philosophy which ignores genetic order, which dismisses the order of their coming into existence of different elements in the universe as irrelevant to questions of reality and value, has not fully wrestled with the problems presented by that universe as it actually exists. If by “in principle” the philosopher means “ignoring as irrelevant the temporal order of becoming,” he has not really faced the question as it must be faced to-day.

(ii) The philosopher must take the trouble to show *in detail* how his estimate of the status of man in the universe, and of the validity of his judgments of fact and value, fits in with the actual history of human origins as they are now known to us.

Such thinkers as Bertrand Russell and John Dewey are the successors of the atomists of ancient Greece. Whilst

the influence of such thought in the world of philosophical study may not be very large, its hold on the common mind of our time can be judged by asking how much of the restlessness characteristic of life in our age is the expression of an underlying uncertainty concerning any eternal significance of human life. It has gained this influence through its apparent willingness to pay more serious attention to the actual history of man and the universe, as studied by the sciences, than has been paid by the philosophy of the great tradition. But the philosophy of the great tradition is now taking up the challenge, is ceasing to be content to refute atomism "in principle," and is striving to show that the discovered history of man's origin is consistent with belief in his status as belonging to eternity as well as to time, and in his capacity to lay hold on eternity in his judgments of fact and value.¹

From the point of view of philosophy, then, the significance of the time-process, the nature of scientific thought, and the status of man and his judgments are living issues—issues which demand investigation afresh in the light of the material collected by four centuries of scientific observation of the actual history of events, issues on which there is much perplexity in the world of to-day.

¹ See, e.g., W. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, especially Lecture VIII.

CHAPTER IV

AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF FAITH

IT is a common temptation of religious people to expect that God will miraculously preserve the domain of religious life from being subject to the conditions of life which obtain elsewhere. Thus for a while it was thought that the writers of biblical history and biblical science were not subject to the limitations which ordinarily beset chroniclers and scientists. We have more or less learned to discount this pious expectation in our study of the Bible, but in some other directions it still seems to entangle the steps of our inquiries, and notably when we try to think about authority. We tend, almost inevitably, to discuss the problem of authority in the Church as though it were an isolated problem peculiar to Church life, to be decided entirely by reference to ecclesiastical arguments and precedents. It will be the aim of this chapter to inquire whether light may not be shed on the question of authority in the Church by relating some of the problems it involves to similar problems elsewhere.

I

In the first place, it is well worth remembering that, as Aristotle remarked long ago, in every inquiry we have to be content with that degree of accuracy of which the subject-matter admits. To think that God must have given a final revelation, in clear-cut black-and-white terms easily understood by all, of the problem of authority in religious matters which He has not given in similar problems elsewhere is a symptom of the malady from which we are trying to escape. It may be that the absence of a final solution is one of the conditions prescribed by God for the development of human life in religion as elsewhere, and that, as so often, the end of our immediate inquiry will not be the solution of our difficulties, but the discovery where the true difficulties lie. If we

can pare away the superficial problems and penetrate to a recognition of one of those standing tensions which make human life worth living, we shall have achieved a result not wholly without value.

It is instructive to notice that the problem of authority only arises at a somewhat developed stage of Church life, and to observe that a similar development takes place elsewhere. In the history of Christian thought, as in that of human thought in general, such questions are only raised when an attitude of reflective self-consciousness leads to a turning away from the pursuit of knowledge to a criticism of the organ whereby that knowledge is acquired. In the history of philosophy that turning-point has been well described by Professor C. C. J. Webb in his *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*,¹ and the subsequent inquiry into the so-called "Theory of Knowledge" is familiar to all, as it followed its course from the impetus given by Descartes through the work of Locke and Berkeley to the scepticism of Hume. This provoked the reaction of Kant which led to the development of absolute idealism and has been followed in recent times by a return to various forms of realistic epistemology. Meanwhile the work of scientific research went on, and the philosophical argument itself was conducted by the use of the organ whose competence to conduct it was being questioned. It is now generally recognised that while a critical study of epistemology is a necessary part of philosophical inquiry, to *substitute* it for the attempt to discover objective truth is a futile and self-contradictory proceeding. In spite of the fact that physicists physiologists and psychologists daily increase our awareness of our ignorance concerning how we think, we nevertheless go on thinking and continue to believe that by doing so we make some progress in the discovering of truth. Moreover, we learn to beware of the man who tries to side-track us in some inquiry by switching the discussion from the consideration of its object to that of our organs of apprehension, who will not meet us face to face and weigh the intrinsic

¹ Oxford University Press, 1915. See especially pp. 147-153.

value of our arguments, but attempts to circumvent us by describing the sub-conscious grounds of our "rationalisations," or the state of our endocrine glands.

What is the bearing of all this on the question of authority in the Church? It is to suggest that the question of authority must never be allowed to arrogate to itself more than a secondary place in our minds. The progressive discovery of truth, which underlies the development of Christian doctrine, went on before anyone thought of raising the question by what organ of the corporate body it was discovered, and now that the question has been raised there is no reason why we should suspend the prior activity until we can find its answer. Important as the question is, its obscurity must not be made an excuse for refusing to face squarely the problems which arise in the relations of God and man.

II

Another allied problem in a different field which it is worth while to consider is the problem of sovereignty as it is discussed in political philosophy by such writers (to name a few at random) as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, T. H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, W. E. Hocking and H. J. Laski. Where does sovereignty reside? Is it the prerogative of the king as one born to rule by divine right? Or is it rightfully claimed by some group, those (for example) who excel in wealth or in wisdom or in courage? Moreover, four questions are here often intertwined. We may ask: (1) Where does sovereignty actually lie in general? (2) Where should sovereignty actually lie in general? (3) Where does sovereignty actually lie here and now in this community? and (4) Where should sovereignty actually lie here and now in this community? That these questions are to be distinguished from one another may be seen from the fact that a man might answer them all differently. He might, for instance, hold a position which led him to say that (1) sovereignty in general actually resides in the hands of those elements in the community who best combine cunning

and power, whereas (2) it should belong to the people at large as a whole; (3) in this state it has been usurped by a single dictator whose cunning and power have enabled him to become supreme and (4) to suppress the institutions whereby the people ought to be exercising their sovereign rights.

For the theist the problem is simplified; but the corollaries of the simplification are not always clearly grasped. The answers to the first two questions coincide: sovereignty both does and should belong to God.¹ Questions (3) and (4) thus become concerned with the organ or instrument for the exercise of the divine sovereignty on earth, and there is no antecedent ground for assuming that the same form of organisation will always be the right one at all times and in all places. It may be possible, moreover, to combine a genuine devotion to the democratic ideal with a recognition of the fact that a certain nation has not yet sufficiently developed as a whole in political understanding to justify the establishment of a fully democratic system of self-government.

No student of political philosophy is alarmed or surprised by the fact that the search for answers to the questions where sovereignty does and should reside on earth is unending. It is the nature of human life that such questions should have to be raised and solved anew in different times and places. That which unifies the diverse modes of government is in the beyond: it is the sovereignty of God which chooses now this and now that earthly embodiment. But here again we religious people often seem to expect that our human life in the Church shall be exempted from the conditions of all human life on earth, and to think it a scandal that there should be any *problem* of authority at all! It is a real gain, I believe, to grasp firmly the fact that there is no antecedent ground for expecting the seat of authority in the Church to be the same element in the corporate body at all times and in all places. There may well be times when *securus judicat orbis terrarum*, and also times when the *Vox Dei* is expressed through *Athanasius contra mundum*.

¹ See C. C. J. Webb: *In Time of War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1918), iii, iv.

When two parties in the Church are in dispute over some question of doctrine (even though one party be an individual on trial for alleged heresy, and the other the duly constituted organ of Church government), neither is an ultimate authority. Each claims to represent the mind and will of God as made known to them; and judgment can never rightly be passed without a prayer that the earthly sentence may turn out to be such that it is ratified in heaven.

III

The problems concerning the development of doctrine provide our next instance of the way in which questions of a wider import appear in a particular form in theological discussions. In the development of Christian doctrine, what is it that remains the same, and what is it that changes? Our temptation is to think that this is a simple question, which can be answered once and for all by some nice neat little phrase such as "the rendering explicit of what was implicit in the *depositum fidei*." In thus expecting a final answer to one of the deepest of unsolved problems we only reveal the superficiality of our own thought—like Professor John Dewey, who thinks to solve his problems by reference to "the notion of growth," thus closing the door on philosophical inquiry just where it ought to begin.¹

The problem of being and becoming, of identity in difference, is a deep mystery wherever it is found, whether it be in the evolutionary process of creation taken as a whole, or in the growth of a single acorn into an oak. There is something that remains the same, for an acorn does not become a beech or an elm. But what is it? If a man could answer that question, one might be prepared to listen with some expectation of enlightenment to what he had to say concerning the principle of development in Christian doctrine. Meanwhile, until he appears, we had better continue

¹ See *Experience and Nature* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925), p. 275: and compare H. W. B. Joseph: *The Concept of Evolution* (Oxford University Press, 1924).

to beware of apparently simple formulae employed to disguise the difficulty.

Undoubtedly there is an element which remains the same through all the true development of the Christian faith, and undoubtedly there are false attempts at development which have to be rejected as perversions. But by what canon the true are to be distinguished from the false is a question as yet passing the wit of man. The Christian religion is a unique thing in the world, working out its development for the first and only time in history. We are, as it were, inside the first acorn that became an oak, and how can we tell which is the right way to be going?

Negative and unsatisfactory as the results of our inquiry may so far appear, they have at least one considerable value. Now that we realise the true nature of some of the difficulties involved in the question of authority in the Church, we shall cease impatiently to demand an immediate and final solution. Out of the background of unsolved mysteries we shall seek grounds for action whereby we may walk by reasonable faith if not by sight.

IV

There is no longer any novelty in the assertion that the words "human reason" and "divine revelation" denote neither two different methods of arriving at the same truth, nor two different methods each appropriate to discovering a different kind of truth, but the obverse and reverse sides of the one and only method of discovering truth at all. All truth is God's truth, whether it be discovered by microscope or telescope, by prophetic insight, or by any other mode of human sensitiveness working through whatever instrument it finds available. In so far as the discovery is due to God's provision of that which we learn about Him, it comes through divine revelation; in so far as it is apprehended by us through our human capacity for grasping it, it comes through the use of human reason.

But, although we can no longer set reason and revelation

over against one another as has sometimes been done in the past, there is a very real distinction to be recognised which may, perhaps, be described by using the terms "general revelation" and "special revelation." Man learns through his experience of spatio-temporal particulars occurring in the history of creation, and in course of time penetrates to the interpretation of them as earthly embodiments of a stream of purposive energy proceeding from an eternal source. Indeed, he penetrates still deeper, and finds himself holding personal relations with that source of all being, whom he loves, serves and worships as God. Whence has this deeper insight come to him? Through special series of historical events occurring within the wider framework of spatio-temporal events in general, the most significant of such special series of events being the history of the Hebrew people with its culmination in the Gospel story and the development of the Christian Church.¹ If, for example, I ask myself whence I derive my convictions (*a*) that water runs downhill, and (*b*) that God's loving forgiveness is adequate to absorb the blackest sins I can conceivably commit, I regard the first as belonging to the sphere of "general revelation" and the second to that of "special revelation." To illustrate the point further, learning by special revelation may be analogous to taking a special course in university (or other) education. A man who has made a special study of some department of medicine thereby knows more of some things than his fellow-men who have not shared his experience; he becomes, as we say, a specialist. Similarly, a man who has entered into that knowledge of God which He has given us in the historical development of the Christian religion has, *as a matter of fact*, received a special revelation which others can only share by sharing with him in the method of discovery.

It is a commonplace of traditional theology to state that the full richness of God's being is not exhausted in what

¹ Cp. A. N. Whitehead: *Religion in the Making* (Cambridge, 1936) pp. 47 ff.; and C. C. J. Webb: *Studies in the History of Natural Theology* (Oxford, 1915), pp. 29-32.

He reveals of His nature to man. To us who, in this generation, are learning to "take time seriously," and to regard the history of human development as the communication by God to man of an increasing insight into and share in His own life, it is clear that at no moment is the full content of that which is to be given comprised in revelation-up-to-date. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ was the initiation of a new stage in that process of God's giving and man's receiving, a stage in which from the beginning there lies the potentiality of the fulfilment of the whole purpose of God for man; but the full meaning of God's self-revelation of Himself to man in Christ will only become possessed by man when in the course of time His Church has entered into it.

By recognising the distinction between special revelation and general revelation, as drawn above, we would seem to catch a glimpse of the plan devised by God for the education of His Church. God is one, but He reveals Himself to us in different ways. As a result of this there come actions and reactions, and often a state of tension, between our apprehensions of Him received in different modes of His self-manifestation. In the passing of time it does not always happen that our development along the one path keeps step with that along the other. An "age of faith" may need to be followed by an age of scientific progress, and then the "faith" may find that it needs to readjust its own understanding of itself before it is ready to reinspire the failing optimism of disillusioned science. Sometimes the one field, and sometimes the other, is that in which the advance is being made, and then there is often friction before, on one side or other, the leeway is made up. This friction is God's spur to our mental inertia, goading us on to enter into the fuller possession of what He has in store for us.

If this be so, then it is one of the most important duties of the Christian Church to be always on the look-out to discover what in the field of general revelation will illuminate and develop our understanding of our faith. We have, indeed, to hold and guard the content of our special revelation, to bear witness to that element of identity which must

persist through all the changes, but (like the talent in the parable) it is not to be buried in the ground or hidden in a napkin, but to grow by trafficking in the commerce of human thought.

From this point of view, the question of authority in the Church wears a slightly different aspect from that which we have already considered. We may now think of the Church as a society on earth entering by the use of its reason into the revelation which God is giving it. The question now is, which of the possible claimants can rightly be recognised as the reason of the Church for the fulfilment of this task? Is it to be the reason of any one individual, or of some group, or of the whole body? All three methods have been tried, but none, so far as I am aware, with success. The reversal of its decisions in succeeding generations appears to be an inevitable Nemesis that overtakes every officially infallible organ of humanity appointed for the discovery of truth. Perhaps our last and fiercest temptation, as churchmen, is the temptation to cling to the delusion that, because we are the sons of God, we may cast ourselves down from the pinnacle of our theological edifice, upborne by angels for whose aid the mathematician and the physiologist may plead but will plead in vain.

v

The problem of sovereignty, the problem of identity in difference, the problem of the validity of human reason—here are three problems which are always with us in secular philosophy. Progress comes not by evading them, or shutting our eyes to them, but by wrestling with them as they recur from age to age embodied in concrete situations. Within the Church these problems present themselves in special forms, and we delude ourselves if we expect to be exempt from the task of wrestling as our brothers wrestle elsewhere. So far as the “church militant here on earth” is concerned, we must not ask for a final, once-for-all solution of any one of these problems in terms of a neat formula

to be used at all times and in all places as a criterion of justifiable sovereignty, of true identity, or of infallible pronouncement. It is not the authority which guarantees the content of its utterance, but the content of the utterance which proves or disproves the authority.

But what is to prove or disprove the content of the utterance? The motto of present-day thought—that we are learning to “take time seriously”—gives the answer. “Time will show.” If this appears cold comfort, it is at any rate consoling to reflect that, in spite of all theories and formulae, it describes the method by which the Church has actually lived and grown, whether it knew it or not. It was prescribed many years ago by an unknown writer in the book Deuteronomy,¹ and it survives in the teaching given to students of dogmatic theology in our theological colleges to-day. When it is asked what constitutes an oecumenical decision, the answer is that the decision must be promulgated by a constitutionally convened council of the Church and ratified by being accepted by the faithful.² Thus, of the decrees put forward by the Council of Nicaea in the year 325, some did and some did not attain to oecumenical authority. The process of ratification and rejection was essentially similar to that whereby in more recent years certain teachings of Bishop Colenso were first condemned by officially appointed guardians of the Anglican faith, and are now taught in every Anglican seminary. “The ratification of conciliar decisions by catholic consent” is a translation into ecclesiastical language of the maxim “Time will show.”

It would probably be unwise to attempt to define with any precision the functions which should be performed by different elements in the Church, as it goes on its way down the ages learning what time has to show; what part, for instance, is to be played by the piety of the saint, the learning of the scholar, or the administrative wisdom of the

¹ Deut. xviii. 21, 22.

² Cp. T. A. Lacey on “Catholic Consent,” in *Authority in the Church: A Study of Principles* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1928).

episcopate. But from empirical observation one generalisation seems to be possible as descriptive of what does as a matter of fact happen. It seems, as a general rule, to be the part of the Church as a whole in its corporate capacity to bear witness to the element of identity, of being, in the Christian faith, to conserve for the future the "revelation-up-to-date," while it is left to individual initiative to emphasise the element of difference, of becoming, to explore the untravelled realms of truth still to be revealed. Here, once again, the life of the Church is not without its parallel in other spheres. The exploration of new countries, the provision of transportation and postal service, the care of the sick, and the education of the young—these and many other public utilities usually owe their existence to private initiative and are only taken over and reorganised as public concerns when they have proved their worth. It is the normal way of progress in human society that new ventures should be the work of individuals or groups who are, as it is said, "in advance of their time." Some of them will be successful, and others will be failures. As time winnows the wheat from the chaff, it is gathered into the official storehouse of the society. It is no reproach to the Church that in its official utterances it lags behind the inspired prophets of the day, so long as the prophets are encouraged to follow their inspiration, and tolerated if sometimes they prophesy somewhat wildly. Ultimately the truth will prevail, and what the truth is time will show.

But is our last word to be in praise of deified Time? God forbid! Time is not God, but God's. There would be no ground for trusting in time to show the truth were not time merely the name for that order of successiveness through which God makes Himself known to man. "Time will show" is a phrase which, rightly interpreted, means, "God will show in His own time." It is a useful phrase, because it recalls us from our modern impatience which leads us to demand, like Marcion of old, that God shall do everything on a sudden, and bids us wait upon Him for the solution of our problems.

It is inevitable that from time to time there shall be tension and friction between the deliverances of special revelation and general revelation, and also between the accepted content of revelation-up-to-date and the forward-adventuring speculation of prophet or scholar. When these are in apparent conflict, what are we to do? We must renew our faith in the first article of our Creed. There is but one God, and He is the Creator of all things visible and invisible—special revelation and general revelation, truth already grasped and truth yet to be learned, these all come from Him, and in Him is to be found their reconciliation and their unity. It is the unity of God in which we put our trust, and the test of a robust faith in Him is our willingness to tolerate for a time the strain and stress of inability to reconcile apparent contradictions in our discoveries. They must continue to be felt as strains and stresses, as incentives to further effort towards that knowledge of God in which they shall be harmonised. But because our faith is faith in God the eternal giver, who still has more to give, and not in man as up to the present endowed, we shall cease to complain of the conditions of our learning and to look for some already constituted infallible authoritative guide. Order and authority there must be in the Church, but it is such authority as is needed for practical purposes to enable the Church to continue pressing onward in the exploration of all that God has to give in the way in which God wills us to receive it. There are times when for the good of the whole body the headstrong individual must be checked by the authority of “the powers that be,” and there are times when the “powers that be” must recognise the voice of one who speaks with authority and not as the scribes. Only in each situation as it arises can the question be decided where on this occasion the authority is to be found. Yet our conclusion is not the advocacy of chaotic anarchy, for by our faith we trust in the guidance of Him who is the source of all authority, believing with the poet Lowell that

“Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.”

PART II

MATERIAL FOR THOUGHT

CHAPTER V

THE QUESTION OF FREEDOM

I

ONE of the many stories current in Oxford concerning Benjamin Jowett tells of an occasion when an undergraduate read him a lengthy essay conclusively disproving the existence of freedom of the will. The Master listened patiently to the end, and then made one comment: "That's great nonsense. There's all the difference in the world between your going out of this room by yourself and my kicking you out." Such a rough-and-ready disposition of one of the most perplexing problems of philosophy may have been a salutary dose of medicine for a sophisticated undergraduate, but it is hardly likely to satisfy a serious inquirer any more than Dr. Johnson's claim to refute Berkeley by kicking a stone. It is of value, nevertheless, as clearly describing a distinction which we all make in everyday life, when we are not philosophising. We do distinguish between going out of a room "of our own will" (as we say) and being pushed out by some external force, such as a fellow-man's hand and boot, or a gas explosion, and we commonly think of the former act as being free in contrast with the latter which is enforced.

Like so many things which in our everyday life we take for granted as "simple facts," this distinction turns out, when investigated, to be far from simple, and the account of the controversies between those who have maintained and those who have denied its validity, and of the efforts made among the former party to decide which events belong to which class, occupy no small portion of the history of philosophy.

The importance of the question for the study of Christian philosophy needs no emphasis. Christian thought has had to wrestle with it from time to time as it has come to the fore again and again. In these days the study of psychology has given it a new significance. In many places where psychology is studied and taught it is tacitly assumed that belief in human freedom, as described in Dr. Jowett's distinction, is an outworn relic of a pre-scientific age. It is in the light of current psychological study that the question of freedom must be considered to-day.

There would seem to be two main schools of thought among recent students of psychology which for convenience may be called the psychoanalytic and the behaviourist. By "psychoanalytic" I do not mean exclusively "Freudian," but any psychology in which "psychic" events are recognised as distinct from physical. By "behaviourist" I mean that school of thought which hopes to account for all events, including human actions, by the formula "stimulus-reflex," allowing no initiating power to conscious human intention. This point of view is perhaps best described by reference to the now famous experiments of Pavlov on canine salivation. It was found that a dog's mouth waters at the approach of appetising food, and that other stimuli, by being at first combined with the food and then substituted for it, could be made to produce the same effect. This effect was involuntary on the part of the dog, a purely physical reflex action.

In attempting to understand how it is that psychology has come to take this twofold course, I would suggest the following explanation. In our ordinary, everyday outlook, before we begin to philosophise or psychologise (if one may coin the word) we commonly distinguish between events which we ascribe to the physical order and events which we ascribe to conscious purpose. The former we think of as proceeding in accordance with a sequence of cause and effect which we commonly call "mechanistic," the latter as free acts of will. In human life we should have no hesitation in placing the processes of respiration and digestion in the former class, and distinguishing them from acts of

which we might say, "I made up my mind to do that." But while in clear instances of each we seem to be able to distinguish these two classes of events, there is an obscure area on the border line between the two in which it is difficult to say to which class a particular event should be referred. Take, for example, that stage in the growth of a boy when he becomes aware of the attractions of the other sex. He has been accustomed to run about with other boys, and possibly to regard girls—and boys who show a liking for the society of girls—as "silly." But now his habits of life change. If a pretty girl comes into the room or the railway carriage where he is, he "sits up and takes notice." What is happening?

The psychoanalyst and the behaviourist seem to differ by taking as their guiding principle of interpretation one or other of those classes of events which in some instances are clearly distinguishable. They set out, as it were, from opposite shores to explore the uncharted sea between the two. To the behaviourist, what is happening in the boy is a physico-chemical reaction, comparable to the canine salivation in the presence of food. But to the psychoanalyst, what is happening is a purposive striving after some desired satisfaction. Only, as the boy cannot be accused of consciously either desiring the satisfaction or striving after it, some subject of the desire and of the purposive activity has to be found, and he finds himself driven to the mythology of "the unconscious self." Another illustration of the same cleavage of thought, taken from life at the sub-human level, is provided by the question Why does a hen sit on her eggs? "Maternal instinct, aiming at the propagation of the species," says one school. "Nonsense," says the other; "it is because a local inflammation on the under side of the hen is soothed by contact with the smooth warm surface of the eggs. Irritate a capon with red pepper, and it will sit just as well as any hen. It is nothing but reaction to stimulus, just like the dog's reaction to the scent of food."

But the fact remains that the result of this correspondence between maternal inflammation and the soothing power of

the eggs does issue in the chickens. It looks as though each school of thought had got hold of one side of the truth; as though what the facts reveal is an order of events which, regarded from the outside, bear all the marks of being both mechanistic and purposive, but cannot be ascribed to any particular purposer. The hen's action does fulfil the purpose of race preservation, but the hen is innocent of aiming at any such thing. The boy is seeking a satisfaction the fulfilment of which will contribute to the life of the human race, but he may be quite unaware of the fact.

To meet this situation some psychologists are inclined to suggest the hypothesis of some kind of vital urge which animates creation. Whether they call it urge, or *élan vital*, or *libido*, or what not, makes little difference. Whether it be described in English, French or Latin, it is an attempt to describe that element in the phenomena of life which goes beyond mere machinery but is not the conscious purposive activity of the individual concerned. But this hypothesis is surely insufficient. It is a timid, half-hearted approach towards a solution of the problem. It leaves out just the crucial element required, that of intelligent purposiveness. It is more than a universal urge that is required to explain the facts: it is a universal purpose. In many cases the formula which seems most adequate is one which speaks of a mechanism serving the universal purposiveness. But to speak of the "universal purpose" is to speak of God. Purposes without any purposer are nonsense, and though we may acquit the boy and the hen of being the purposers, we cannot recognise the action as purposive without sooner or later being driven either to mythology or to God. Though either school in psychology, when standing alone, may dispense with God (along with a number of other awkward facts to which a blind eye has to be turned), if one tries to allow for what is true in both schools, one needs the hypothesis of God to make the complementary truths hang together.

It would seem that in many cases, so far as the interpretation of the immediate facts is concerned, the account given by the behaviourist is to be preferred to that of the

psychoanalyst, and that we owe a debt of gratitude to the behaviourist school for recalling us to sanity from some of the wilder speculations of their opponents. This conclusion is confirmed when we look back over the past history of man, both human and pre-human. In the history of human development it seems to be true that the physical organism comes first in time, and functions as a "going concern" before there supervenes upon it that potentiality of self-conscious experience which we call the self or soul. Throughout the history of the previous development of the physical organism the principle of progress seems to be that of adjustment or adaptation to fresh environment. Where there is perfect adjustment to the *status quo* there is stagnation. Progress is born of the struggle to live in unprecedented circumstances. But the creatures in this struggle must not be personified, as though they were consciously striving after this end. Their adaptation may be described on behaviourist lines, as reflex reactions to fresh stimuli.

When in this way the physical creature has reached a certain state of complex, differentiated organisation of structure, there appears that self-conscious subject of its experiences which we call man. To use crudely metaphorical language, one may perhaps think of this self-conscious purposive life as being at first like a faint and flickering wisp of flame on the surface of that "going concern," the body. The whole point of life on earth is that this flickering flame, this potentiality of self-conscious purposive life, this embryo self or soul, shall grow into full selfhood or soulhood by extending its control over that "going concern," and taking up its behaviouristic functioning into its own purposive self-determination. The experiences mediated through each particular body go to the making of each self or soul what it is; it grows and develops as the subject of these experiences, apart from which it has no being at all. They give it its concrete character and its distinct characteristics. But if it is to grow, it must assert its mastery over that from which it draws its content. How is this to be?

If in looking over the course of *human* history we ask what

are the high points of human achievement, we find them pre-eminently in the fields of art, learning and conduct. In other words, when the stage of physical development has been reached at which man exists as a self-conscious, purposive subject of bodily experiences, the direction in which further progress can take place is in the spiritual sphere. It is hard to account for man's progress in art, learning and conduct except as springing from his glimpses of the eternal beauty, truth and goodness, from graspings at that higher spiritual environment to which he is trying to adjust himself. In religion we claim to hold personal converse with Him who is the source of those glimpses of the eternal which have inspired the artist, the thinker and the man of noble life.

But still, as before, struggle to readjust is the secret of progress; only now the struggle is that of an individual capable of knowing what he is doing and of consciously choosing either to make the effort or to refuse to do so. He exists as the subject of the experiences of a body fashioned by centuries of adaptation to adjust itself to the physical environment of this world. Its natural tendency is to react harmoniously to the *status quo*. But the man has had his glimpse of the world beyond, and if, like St. Paul, he is to be able to say "Wherefore I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision,"¹ he must face the struggle of adjusting himself to the society of God. *What he is made of* is provided by the experiences which come to him through the body; *what sort of a soul he makes of himself* depends on the way in which he controls these experiences. Shall it be in an effort to climb the steep ascent of heaven, or to settle down in comfortable adaptation to the world in which he starts? "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation."²

II

What I now propose to do is to begin with our everyday distinction between events which we assign to a "mech-

¹ Acts xxvi. 19.

² Eccclus. ii. 1.

anistic" sequence of cause and effect, and events which we describe by saying "I made up my mind to do that."

The inquirer who is conducting an investigation in the world of mechanistic sequence takes that world for granted, and attempts to discover particular connections which obtain within it. Thus a doctor seeks for the cause of cancer. He is not seeking to answer the question "How does natural causation work in general?"—he takes that for granted and asks, "Given the system of natural causation, what events in that system are connected with this cancerous growth in the human body?" Similarly, we do not profess to be able to give any *general* account of why or how human beings act as they do, beyond saying that they act as a result of making up their minds to do so. The grounds on which this or that particular act was done can be explained, but only by taking for granted the existence of the world of willed or purposive events. This purposive order, or world of willed events, is, as a matter of fact, at least as well known to us as the order of natural causation; we imply its existence whenever we ask such a question as "Why on earth did you do that?"—a question which invites a man to explain his act to us as to people who know what it is to make up their minds to act on reasonable grounds.

There would seem to be this *prima facie* difference between the two orders, that in the case of an event in the mechanistic system its explanation has to be sought in the previously existent conditions, while a purposive event is explained by reference to the future, to what it was aiming at. Attempts have been made to get round this on the ground that the goal must be grasped in consciousness and desired before the act can be done, so that the goal-grasped-and-willed can be regarded as the mechanistic cause of the resulting act. Granted the assumption that mechanistic causation is the only possible explanation of any and every event, this might be satisfactory; but unfortunately the assumption that has to be taken for granted is the conclusion that had to be proved. Take this away, and all that has been said is

that an act of will has to be willed before it can be executed, and this proves nothing. One is equally justified, at this preliminary stage, in assuming that an act of will is an event *sui generis*, inexplicable in terms of mechanistic causation; and to claim the relief that comes from being under no necessity to adapt the forward-looking purposiveness of human life to the Procrustean bed of determination *a tergo*. The further examination of these two assumptions is to form the subject of the rest of this chapter.

III

We start, then, from our everyday distinction between mechanistic and willed events. It is the contention of the behaviourist that this distinction is a false one, and that the latter events turn out on examination to be instances of the former in disguise. But this contention raises at least four difficulties, which may be stated as follows.:

1. At the very outset one's breath is taken away by the boundless optimism of the hypothesis. What is asserted is not merely that *some* events which we thought to owe their existence to their being willed do not really do so, but that there are no truly willed events at all. As an example of what is implied let us consider what happens in the tossing of a coin. When the initial impetus has been given which sends the penny spinning in the air, its movements proceed according to determinate mechanistic sequence, and whether it ultimately comes down heads or tails is only unpredictable by us because we have no instruments of adequate complexity and refinement to make the necessary observations and calculations. But suppose we discover that the coin has been loaded so as to ensure its falling with a certain side up. We should naturally think that factors of another order had entered into the situation, factors which are not patient of the same kind of measurement and calculation as those which govern the behaviour of the coin after it has left the spinner's

hand.¹ It is this which the behaviourist denies, optimistically heralding the advent of the day when the surreptitious doctoring of the penny will be clearly exhibited as a process of precisely the same order as its career from thumb-nail to ground. No doubt he has some scores to his credit; no doubt he has revealed to us that some events, which appeared at first sight to be willed, were not—just as psychoanalysts have revealed to us that some beliefs which we thought to be genuine convictions were in truth “projections” or “rationalisations.” But as in the one case, so in the other, we may justifiably pause before jumping to the conclusion that evidence which is of use to enable us to distinguish false from true claimants to the status of conviction or action is fatal to the existence of any true claimants at all.

2. It is not sufficient, of course, to call attention to the behaviourist’s optimism in order to refute his position. By this time we Christians should have learned through sad experience the folly of any Spencerian tendency to build our faith on the gaps in scientific discovery simply because they are gaps. We must have some more positive ground for doubting that an event is patient of mechanistic interpretation than the fact that the way to such an interpretation has not as yet been found. Are there any reasonable grounds for thinking that in his optimism the behaviourist is unreasonably optimistic?

We may here call attention to the fact that, at starting, the willed order has at least as good a claim to our respect as the mechanistic. In refusing to accede to the request that we should regard the loading of the coin as parallel to its

¹ It is not a question of chance or no chance. There is no more chance in the loading of the coin than in the behaviour of the spun coin. Indeed, there is less, and it may be suggested that the only real chance we ever experience is deliberately willed chance. In the above instance such element of chance as there is is due to the coin being deliberately spun in such a way as to outstrip our capacity for predicting its fall. Chance is due to willed concealment of the factors necessary for apprehension, and only exists in a world of beings who conduct their lives to some extent on a basis of will. The experience of such chance is the origin of our illusory ascription of chance to events in the mechanistic world. Cp. below, p. 90.

subsequent movements in the air, we are not making an obscurantist refusal to abandon the unknown for the known. *We know very well what it means to cheat*—better, indeed, than what it means to be sent spinning through the air. Even when we do experience the latter sensation, it remains inexplicable brute fact to us until interpreted in terms of will; a football game is easier to understand than a railway accident, and the universe does not become more explicable if collisions on the football field are regarded as obscurer examples of what happens when a crowd of people is hit by a tornado. Our first ground for not accepting the behaviourist optimism is that we feel there is need for caution before abandoning what we seem to understand for what is quite opaque to us, on the strength of evidence which covers so little of the required ground.

It has been often observed that a thing may be so well known to us that we take it for granted and fail to observe its existence. This seems to have happened once again in the case of the behaviourists' attitude to will. Their exposition of human nature is combined with reproaches levelled against those who do not accept it, who are accused of shutting their eyes to the truth and standing in the way of a remoulding of human society nearer the heart's desire. Now there is no doubt that for such applied sciences as that of advertising behaviourism *does work*—up to certain limits often overlooked—and there is no doubt of its efficiency as an instrument of social control.¹ Hypnotised by evidence of success in regimenting human beings, the behaviourist is blind to the fact that someone must do the regimenting and must presumably have some idea of the direction in which he wishes it to proceed. If the awkward question is raised, the answer is postponed on the ground that there has not yet been time for sufficient behaviourist practice on which to work out the behaviourist ethics of the future, in which everything will be satisfactorily explained. In the meantime, the ideal aimed at seems to be to get rid of all unnecessary accompaniments to efficient functioning as bread-

¹ But see below, p. 93.

earners. God for the behaviourist (had he any use for the conception) would be "the economic-man" writ large, and it is hardly surprising that Dr. J. B. Watson, the high-priest of the cult, confesses himself unable to give any rational grounds for wanting to live. In this he is quite consistent: if there be nothing but blind mechanistic determination there are no rational grounds for anything; and if there are no rational grounds for anything it is useless to ask the behaviourist why he writes books apparently aimed at inducing his reader on rational grounds to change his opinions. But those of us who still retain our faith in reason cannot but prefer the rationality of his assumptions to the irrationality of his conclusions, and claim his actions as evidence that he knows how to make use of his will even while pretending that no intelligible meaning can be attached to the idea of it.

3. We thus approach a more fundamental criticism of the whole behaviouristic scheme, finding it wanting because content to rest in an unintelligible mechanism which simply has to be accepted, as Professor Alexander would say, "with natural piety." Intellectually we are to bow our heads before an ultimate mystery which is unworthy of our worship. In this the behaviourist is intellectually (as he is also morally) reactionary; his philosophy is akin to that of Thales and Anaximander (whose importance in the history of thought is that they prepared the way for Anaxagoras), and if he had any religion it would belong to the pre-prophetic era when the will of God was to be sought through dreams, or the casting of lots, or wizards that peeped and muttered. Since those days philosophy, religion and science have all made some progress, and the method which has been found fertile in each of those fields has been that of a rational self-criticism based on the postulate of the fundamental intelligibility of reality to man's rational consciousness. Those of us who are theologians are sufficiently familiar with obscurantism masquerading as latter-day wisdom to be able to recognise the breed in our excursions abroad into the realms of psychology.

It is the insistent pressure of the demand for intelligibility

which underlies the development of all idealist philosophy; but it is essential to any sane idealism to emphasise the point that the pressure that drives the mind onwards is all of a piece throughout. The same spirit which forbids a man to rest content with a single brute fact as "given," and drives him on to seek to understand it in relation to its environment—this spirit, which thus creates a scientist, creates also a philosopher when it forbids a man to rest content with the systematised order of events as discovered by the sciences, and drives him on to seek a meaning in it. The unity of the spirit has at times tended to become obscured, owing to the intense degree of specialisation demanded of modern students by the vast and complex mass of information which has been acquired through scientific research. Hence comes a blindness which issues on the one side in insanely idealistic philosophy, and on the other in obscurantist science. Insane idealism is that which thinks itself free to ignore the contributions of the sciences as describing the reality which it is trying to understand, while obscurantist science is well illustrated by the remark of a biologist of my acquaintance who, after listening to Mr. H. W. B. Joseph's Herbert Spencer Lecture on "The Concept of Evolution,"¹ dismissed it with the remark "Of course, that is a philosopher's argument, not a scientist's." Among other products of the war between insane idealism and obscurantist science are the misguided pacifists on either side—scientists who take refuge in irrational religions on the ground that their scientific research has nothing to do with God's self-revelation, and philosophers who glory in having abandoned the task to which they were called.

Happily there are signs here of a growing dissatisfaction with war; a growing appreciation of that unity of the spirit which must be the bond of peace between scientist and philosopher. We may call in evidence the insight with which

¹ Oxford University Press, 1924. This contains in a brief compass the best criticism known to me of the presuppositions on which the behaviourist position rests.

that gallant upholder of sane idealism, the late Bernard Bosanquet, rejected all accounts of the physical world which involved treating it as essentially different from that which the sciences find it to be,¹ and regarded as central in his thought the conviction that while the world of scientific observation demands to be seen in the light of a larger whole in order to be intelligible, it is by this process not destroyed but established. On the other side, there is the witness of such facts as Professor Whitehead summarises in his "Science and the Modern World,"² where he shows how in the historical development of scientific research the spirit of the inquiry, having conceived it in the womb of rationalism and given it birth, is now driving it on willy-nilly into philosophy by the irresistible logic of its own pursuit of understanding.

If this be true, then the behaviourist contentment with an unintelligible mechanistic order as ultimate is reactionary, not only from the point of view of philosophy but also from that of science. Science itself has no *locus standi* apart from the spirit of the demand for intelligibility, which drives it onward in the persons of such thinkers as Mr. Julian Huxley and Professor Lloyd Morgan to meet the astringent discipline of critics such as Mr. Joseph, and thus developed to seek a temporary resting-place in the thought of a Bosanquet or a Whitehead. Meanwhile the behaviourist stands outside the pilgrim throng—and the pity of it is that he has in his hands a much-needed treasure to contribute to the common wealth of those who are journeying in the way.

4. Perhaps the most curious fact of all about the behaviourist psychology is that it should have come into vogue just at the time when the cry of the hour in philosophy is that we should "take time seriously", and recognise the emergence of real novelties in the history of creation. To take but a few names at random, one has only to think of Bergson, William James, Samuel Alexander and H. Wildon Carr to be reminded that in all probability the position that

¹ *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (Macmillan, 1912), iii, iv, v.

² Macmillan, 1925.

Christian thinkers of the present generation must be prepared to face is not the denial of all freedom on the basis of a universal mechanistic predetermination, but the assertion that God Himself is in process of self-creation, and this with such freedom that He has not the least idea what He is going to be or do next. Such philosophy receives a ready welcome from many scientists, especially from those biologists, psychologists and sociologists who are emancipating themselves from the traditional obligation to make their studies conform to the canons of mathematical physics. To turn from these live discussions to the behaviourist contentions seems like entering an atmosphere curiously antiquated and remote from the realities of twentieth-century thought.

IV

I have suggested that to obtain a balanced view of human nature it is necessary to accept and assimilate the contributions of both psychoanalytic and behaviourist schools, uniting them in such a synthesis as that outlined by the late Bernard Bosanquet in the fourth and fifth chapters of "The Principle of Individuality and Value"; and regarding that fount of energy, described variously as *libido*, *élan vital*, life stream, or what not, as the active will of God. In doing this one ignores the fact that as a general rule the psychoanalyst is professedly as "mechanistic" in his outlook as the behaviourist; he claims to deal with a psychic as distinct from a purely physiological mechanism. Many of my readers, indeed, may feel that I have given a misleading account of the psychoanalytic position, which would not be accepted by the average practising psychoanalyst, and that this is hardly a fair way to treat a witness in order to make his evidence support my case. To this my answer would be that his testimony contains a concealed inconsistency of which he is unaware, and that I have taken the liberty of trying to expound his position in such a way as to make sense of it. But the point deserves further attention, and to attend to it now will help to set forward my main argument.

Psychoanalysis took its origin and gained its name in a break-away from the habit of medical science to treat psychology as a branch of physiology. It was discovered experimentally that certain nervous and mental ills could be relieved, not by rest and bromides, but by exploring their connections with other elements in the "psychic" life of the patient. The psychoanalyst broke with the traditions of medical practice in thus postulating a "psychic order," a sequence of psychic events distinct from the physical order with which medicine had hitherto concerned itself, and within which it had looked for the causes of both physical and mental ills. Those who made this discovery had themselves been trained in the traditions from which they revolted, and thus naturally brought with them to their new study and practice many of the ideas with which they had hitherto worked. They thus transferred to the hypothetical "psychic sequence" the same conception of mechanistic determination to which they had become accustomed in their physiological work. This seemed to them to be the only way in which they could treat "the new psychology" as scientific and retain their self-respect as scientists.

But what is meant by "psychic"? The word seems to be used to describe some kind of non-material substance existing alongside of that other kind of substance called physical. It is thus akin to the "spiritual substance" of the scholastic philosophers—akin to it in "what it is made of," but differing from it in its habits, being not free but mechanistically determined. But those of us who have come to disbelieve in the spiritual substance of the scholastics,¹ and to regard the human self or soul as the unifying self-conscious subject of its own bodily experiences, find this "psychic stuff" of the psychoanalysts open to the same criticisms as the "spiritual substance" of the scholastics. The psychoanalytic scheme appears to require an analysis of reality into three kinds of "stuff"—material, psychic,

¹ See my contribution to *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (ed. A. E. J. Rawlinson; Longmans, Green & Co., 1928).

and self-conscious, the psychic being an intermediate grade between the other two.

If for this scheme of three kinds of stuff or substance we substitute the conception of a single cosmic process permeated by an energy which in human bodies becomes aware of itself, and is thus individualised into distinct self-conscious purposive minds, each endowed with some measure of self-determination, we lay bare the confusion latent in psycho-analytic determinism. We have no room for more than two main divisions: the world of sub-conscious events where we observe from without the behaviour of the permeating energy, and the world of conscious events which we interpret from within as the self-expressions of purposive individuals and the true sphere of value judgments. The difficulty arises from the fact that, as always in nature, we find the paradox of continuity combined with the emergence of real differences of kind. In the order of time the world of sub-conscious events precedes the emergence of conscious purposive selves; in the continuous process wherein the latter come into being on the basis of the bodily organisms developed in the former there is a borderland where the one kind of event shades off into the other as colours shade off into one another when spread out in the spectrum. The behaviourist tries to treat all events as belonging to the earlier order; pan-psychists to treat all as belonging to the second. The psychoanalyst avoids the pitfall of trying to draw a single line to divide the two worlds, but his way of avoiding it is to draw two lines, enclosing a neutral zone to be considered as a third kind of world—as though one were to interpose between red and yellow a third colour which is to be thought of as red in its nature and yellow in its habits.

But why must these events, though “psychic” in nature, be thought of by the psychoanalyst as mechanistic in behaviour? I believe that the answer to this question will carry us far into the heart of our own problem, for I believe that the real urge which underlies the psychologist’s demand for a mechanistic subject-matter (rationalise it as he may) is

fear—fear of finding himself set to deal with a “chancy” universe in which anything may happen anyhow. What he seeks is a “dependableness” in the objects of his study, which will make that study a reasonable occupation, and he assumes, without having thought the matter out, that this can only be given by a mechanistic system. But when we do try to think the matter out, and ask ourselves what is the ground of the “dependableness” in the mechanistic order itself, it appears to some of us that we are ultimately driven to find it in what some thinkers would call the plan of the immanent spirit of the whole, and others the will of God.

It is surely in order for the Christian, at this point, to remind his scientific friends that his religion, like their science, has made some progress since primitive magic gave birth to them both. In particular he can call attention to the fact that the Christian religion is characterised by a history peculiarly fitted to meet our present point. It was in the early days of primitive Hebrew religion that God was thought of as so unknowable and undependable that man could never have any reasonable idea of what He was going to do next; to find this out he had to cast lots, or have a dream at a sanctuary, or persuade a wizard to peep and mutter. But many centuries before Christ there came that epoch-making assertion of the great prophetic principle that man’s moral insight is insight into the will of God. However faint and fitful may have been the first workings of this principle within the religion of our spiritual ancestors, it was the leaven which was destined to leaven the lump, and its coming was epoch-making just because it contained within it the germ of rational religion. The moral consciousness of mankind still had much to learn concerning what is good and what evil; much still remains to be learned. But given the principle that insight into the nature of things as revealed in ethics, art, the sciences, philosophy, and history is insight into the character of Him who is the object of our directly personal religious relationships, then our conception of the God we worship will grow *pari passu* with our education in goodness, truth and beauty. This

principle is once for all enshrined in the heart of the Christian religion in the doctrine of the Incarnation, involving as it does the conviction that in the character of the Perfect Man we have revealed to us the character of the God whose will upholds the created universe. It was a Christian seer who followed the tradition of his Jewish ancestors and chose for His description the epithet "Faithful and True,"¹

For the Christian the goodness of God is the ground of the rationality in the universe in virtue of which man, in his inquiries about it, finds a "dependableness" in its behaviour which makes the inquiry worth pursuing. The mechanism of the sub-human natural order is itself grounded in the goodness of God; because He is faithful and true, and the world of nature carries out His will with untiring and obedient energy, the scientist can safely trust in its uniformity. But its dependableness as observed is the dependableness of a purely passive uniformity, of a system in which each distinguishable thing carries out willy-nilly the will of the whole. Men and women are learning what it is to carry out that will as the expression of their own conscious intention. They are in transit from passive conformity to active co-operation, and on the way they wander off into experiments in self-assertion which run counter to the will of God and introduce that "human element" of uncertainty which is the scientist's despair.

If human life be the opportunity of learning to control the body of which one is made, in accordance with one's glimpses of the will of God, then perfect control—which would be perfect freedom—would be experienced only by one whose apprehension of God's will for him and adoption of it as his own will were perfect. What happens when we assert ourselves as not mere passive things, but in doing so will what is not the will of God for us, either through ignorance or sin? The problem is very obscure; but I would tentatively suggest the hypothesis that in so far as our will is other than the will of God we fail to assimilate and control our bodily processes in our spiritual life. The body carries on

¹ Rev. xix. 2; vi. 10; cp. Dr. Charles's note on iii. 7.

in a series of events which enter into our awareness, but whose connection with one another is that of the mechanistic system of the bodily life and not that of membership in the consciously organised whole of our spiritual programme. Nevertheless they have entered into our awareness sufficiently to be discoverable through an investigation directed towards associating them as elements in the conscious life, rather than by such an examination of the brain as might conceivably be rendered possible through the perfecting of instruments for a microscopic X-ray examination of it. If this way of thinking about them could be accepted, it would account for the puzzle of their psychological character and their mechanical habits.

Nevertheless, there are difficulties remaining. There can be no room in our scheme of things for any purely "chancy" events—that is, for any events of which no intelligible account can be given exhibiting their place in the coherent scheme of the whole universe. There seem to be two possible ways of giving such an account. The one exhibits the event in its place in the mechanistic sequence of the physical world, as a member of which it has its relevance to the whole scheme. The other exhibits its own intrinsic value as an act which was worth doing. But our acts of ignorance and sin seem to be neither one nor the other. They seem to be essentially unintelligible, having no place either in the mechanistic sequence or in the conscious human fulfilment of the will of God.

May not the truth possibly be that they are indeed unintelligible if taken by themselves, and that the only way to understand them is to regard them as unsuccessful attempts to be something intelligible, unsuccessful attempts to establish themselves as permanently real events. In the divine plan, which is the ultimate principle of intelligibility in the universe, there is given to all men and women a power of conscious self-determination as the condition of their growing into "the glorious liberty of the children of God."¹ They *can* make use of this in such a way as to commit acts

¹ Rom. viii. 21.

which *are* intrinsically irrational and unintelligible, acts which only escape being "surds" in the coherence of the universe because the allowing of them has its place in the divine plan. So far as we can see, that plan includes the eliciting of good human characters through the evolutionary process of creation, and the conception of ready-made good men is self-contradictory in a way that the allowance of the conditions for growth is not. This is not necessarily to minimise the seriousness of sin by treating it merely as a futile mis-shot at goodness. If there be any truth in the Christian doctrine of the Atonement, it should remind us that the freedom allowed us by God is such that we may misuse it in a way which can only be put right by His incarnate suffering and death and our repentance.¹ Sinful acts cannot be fitted into their place in the divine plan, and thus rationalised, by simply *seeing* them in their place in the scheme; they have to be *put* into their place by divine and human self-sacrifice. Apart from such remaking of them, they come to nothing; the would-be soul sinks back into the realm of sub-conscious mechanism, from which it might otherwise have emerged to the enjoyment of selfhood, freedom and immortality.

v

"There is no smoke without a fire," says the old proverb, and our brief consideration of human nature has shown that both the behaviourist and the psychoanalyst have got hold of something in us that is there to be examined, and that our view of such freedom as we possess must be found in the light of what they have to teach us of the truth about ourselves. The upshot of the discussion, so far, is that we are *in process of becoming free*, but that in order for that process to be possible there does exist what may be called a true freedom of choice, that is to say, a power of self-determination which is controlled neither by external circumstances nor by a man's internal past development as summed

¹ See my *And Was Made Man*, chap. v (Longmans, Green & Co., 1928).

up in his character at the moment, but is the power of a free choice of alternatives provided by the fact of his meeting those circumstances with that character. It is only with the greatest reluctance, and after trying every expedient I could think of to avoid it, that I have been driven to recognise the existence of this freedom of choice as a fact in human nature. Generation after generation of philosophers have explained it away, and have pointed out to the plain man that while, indeed, he was right in believing himself to have freedom, that freedom was quite unlike what he imagined it to be, and much more worth having. So I myself have tried to explain it to successive generations of pupils. Those with a natural talent for becoming sophisticated have readily grasped the explanation; but others have looked puzzled, smiled politely, and (either with or without having asserted that they understood and agreed) have gone away unconvinced.

Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret might well be written up as a motto over the doors of a school of philosophy. The history of philosophy is largely the history of attempts to explain away the stubborn facts of nature by describing them in terms of something else which they are not, in order to make them fit into a coherent system which cannot otherwise assimilate them. What if this freedom of choice be such a fact, which has got to be accepted "with natural piety," something which we know perfectly well from the inside through our experience of it, and which just is not adequately described by those philosophical accounts of it which make it out to be other than that which it appears to be and is?

The necessity of explaining it away arises, of course, from inability otherwise to fit it into the rational coherence of the universe. But if this can be done by viewing it, not as an end in itself, not as that true freedom which is the goal of life, not, indeed, as a possible characteristic of eternal Being, but as a necessary element in the development of creation in time, destined to lose itself in the accomplishment of its task, it may be that by thus "taking time serious-

ly" we shall be able more satisfactorily to weave into our system the witness of the plain man's experience of freedom, his consciousness of a power of choice which may either be lost in slavery to his passions or grow and expand into the true divine freedom, but in either case will be transformed into something other than that which it was to begin with. It is not an ultimately unaccountable element of "chanciness" in the universe; in so far as there is chance in it, it is like the chance deliberately willed in tossing a coin or holding out two chess pawns in such a way as to preclude any method of determining the course of action to be followed other than guess-work. The contingency is explicable as willed contingency, willed for an intelligible purpose; and it is such that it cannot be held either to upset the regularity of the mechanistic order or to be ultimately successful in running counter to the will which is the source of existence both to that mechanistic order and to itself.

Once again, as so often, the question of how we can think of the things of this world is found to depend on how we think of God. Shortly after the death of Bernard Bosanquet, Professor C. C. J. Webb delivered in Oxford a commemorative lecture on his *Philosophy of Religion*, in the course of which he suggested the criticism that Bosanquet had "underrated the importance of the finite individual in the scheme of the universe, or as we may put it in religious language, in the sight of God,"¹ and went on to point out the connection between this attitude to the finite individual (revealed in Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures) and the antagonistic attitude later manifested towards the "humanism" of certain thinkers acutely conscious of the importance of the time-process. In his essay on "God and Time,"² published a few years later, Mr. F. H. Brabant, arguing from the premiss that theology cannot "accept the view according to which God is not God without the Time-

¹ See the *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1923 (vol. xxii, p. 90).

² In *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (ed. Rawlinson; Longmans, 1928).

process," finds the problem of the relation between God and creation insoluble in so far as what is sought is a *metaphysical* ground of that relationship, in the sense of an underlying principle exhibiting the necessity of each to the other. He suggests that the theistic idea of creation, according to which the time-space universe springs from the *will* of God, after a manner pictured by moral rather than metaphysical analogies, enables us more adequately to assimilate and reconcile the various factors which enter into the problem of time and eternity. Without doubt the inspiration one never fails to draw from the study of Bosanquet's works is due in great part to the gallant enthusiasm with which he devoted himself to the search for a metaphysical solution of the problem, and the sincere thoroughness with which he worked out his suggestion towards that end, exhibiting its implications in detail, and accepting them with unflinching steadfastness. Nevertheless, if his work is justly criticised by Professor Webb (as I, for my part, think it is), it is because here in this time-space world of ours there *are* a contingency and a freedom of choice which cannot be given their due place in his system. He has described admirably the freedom to which we aspire, the only kind of freedom we really want; but he cannot do justice to that other freedom, which (though it has to lose itself in its fulfilment) is a necessary condition of our aspiring. Because the time-process is seen as God's self-manifestation through a creation which is, as it were, the eternal reality strung out in time and space, and not a relatively independent order struggling towards its goal, and incapable of being reconciled in thought with the demands of reason until it has been reconciled in deed with the demands of goodness, he cannot admit the temporal reality of a freedom which is eternally inexplicable. But from age to age the Christian faith has resolutely reaffirmed its determination to hold fast to both sides of the problem and to endure the consequent tension until a solution shall be found capable of doing justice in both directions, bearing witness to the temporal reality of time and the relative independence of the temporal

order by its use of the word "creation," and affirming in the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity the intrinsic perfection of the Divine Life, the source and ground of all created existence, itself neither enriched by creation's progress nor impoverished by its disasters, seeing that from that same Godhead come both the riches wherewith creation is blessed and the love whereby its sins are redeemed.

We have travelled some distance, round and round about, since we left Dr. Jowett and his undergraduate. The tour will have been worth while if it has enabled us to see a little more clearly what is involved in asserting, with the Master, our belief in human freedom. It would be folly to make any claim to be able to demonstrate the existence of our freedom; but we have, perhaps, made some progress towards envisaging the kind of world-order in which it could be given an intelligible place.

In our present condition we are in process of transition from functioning willy-nilly in the mechanistic order towards a full co-operative sharing in the perfect freedom of God. In a large measure the behaviourist is right when he says that we are not free, for behaviouristic functioning still plays a large part in our life—larger, perhaps, than we commonly realise. If it were not so, behaviourist psychology would not hold the place of honour which it does in schools where advertisers and salesmen are trained; nor would a priest have to face the temptation to substitute for the more difficult task of eliciting their free response to the love of God the easier method of conditioning his flock to go through the motions of worship. We are still in part mechanistic, but we are also in part free. And yet our freedom is far from perfect—so far, indeed, that it is, *as it stands*, intrinsically unintelligible! It exists only to be either transformed or lost, and it can be fitted into a scheme of the universe only if in that scheme sufficient reality is ascribed to the time-process to allow of its containing elements intelligible as temporal realities, but untranslatable into terms of eternal being except by actual transformation: temporary irrationalities within a rational scheme analogous

to the tossing of a coin as an expression of the spirit of fairness in sport.

We must not, then, be surprised or put out when our behaviourist friend shows us that in some action of ours we were not as free as we had thought we were. Maybe he is right. We do not assert that in every action of ours we are partially free, nor that in any action we are wholly free. But it is our faith and hope that some day, please God, we shall be; and in spite of our philosophical and psychological friends we refuse to explain away that odd and self-contradictory experience of freedom here and now which is the earnest of our hope.

A few years ago a theological student, shortly to be ordained, told a friend that he had come to the conclusion that there was no such thing as unselfishness. He said that he had been examining his past life in preparation for his ordination, and that on reflection he could not honestly say that he had ever done a really unselfish act. Looking back over his life he could see in all his acts, even in those he had thought best and most unselfish at the time, the slimy trail of the serpent of selfishness. His friend, after a caution against overscrupulosity and cynicism, suggested that the existence of unselfishness does not depend on its perfect expression in any one of us up to date, and recalled the saying of the saint that if his self-love died twenty-minutes before he did he would sing "Nunc Dimittis." But did he mean to assert that the same serpentine trail was to be found in the life of Christ, and that selfishness had a home in the social life of the Blessed Trinity?

As with unselfishness, so with freedom. Our freedom is inchoate, imperfect and irrational. If freedom such as ours were asserted of God, then the scientist might indeed throw up his hands at the prospect of facing a "chancy" universe. But behind all is the perfect freedom of God, perfectly informed by His goodness, the rational ground of the "dependableness" discovered in the natural order, the ground of our hope that one day we too shall attain to the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

CHAPTER VI

FREEDOM, GRACE AND PROVIDENCE

UNLESS he has allowed himself to be sophisticated into denying his convictions, the Christian is apt to find himself a genuine Mr. Facing-both-ways on the subject of freedom. Confronted by a behaviourist, he strictly maintains that he is really free to initiate action; confronted by a Pelagian, he asserts with equal vehemence the necessity of divine grace, and acknowledges the truth of his Master's words: "Apart from me ye can do nothing." How can these things be?

"In our present condition we are in process of transition from functioning willy-nilly in the mechanistic order towards a full co-operative sharing in the perfect freedom of God." The answer to the question is to be found, I believe, by working out the implications of this view of human life.

I

The last chapter, from which the above statement is quoted, was an attempt at working out some of those implications, with especial reference to the relation of human life to that mechanistic order from which it emerges. The aim there was to establish the first of the two Christian convictions about freedom. The aim of this essay is to deal with the second, and to consider freedom in relation to our fellow-men and to God. But there are one or two further points concerning our relation to our sub-human environment which it is necessary to notice before we pass on.

In the previous essay we were chiefly concerned to notice the difference between events expressing human volition and events in the mechanistic order, and to advocate a view of human life in which the keynote is sympathy with the struggles of men and women to extricate themselves from the trammels of their original nature and attain to the glori-

ous liberty of the sons of God. The mechanistic sequence of cause and effect appeared as an enemy of our freedom, offering dangerously seductive inducements to us to refuse the responsibility of our inchoate selfhood and to let ourselves be carried along in the stream of events. But we must not forget that this very regularity and orderliness becomes not the hindrance but the help to our self-expression, when once we make the venture of setting out to discover what we can be and do. If I never knew whether the result of putting a kettle on the fire would be to boil the water in it or to freeze it, it would not be much good deciding to make myself a cup of tea. The progressive conquest of nature through scientific discovery, on the principle that "Nature is conquered by being obeyed," is simply the methodical extension of everyone's experience, an extension which discovers new possibilities of human self-expression. Thus the orderliness of nature, which is due to its being informed by the good will of God, crowns its habit of producing novelties by producing beings capable of taking an intelligent share in the work, to whom it presents itself as material adapted to their needs. To enter into knowledge of its ways is to enter into God's mind; to learn to distinguish its right from its wrong use is also to enter into God's mind. Both methods need to be combined if man's relation to the physical world is to promote his growth in freedom. Poison gas is not always employed in the cause of liberty.

Thus man comes to take a co-operative hand in the process whereby he is himself being created. In that process real novelties do occur; so long as we limit our view to the world of time and space it is not true to say "*Ex nihilo nil fit.*" The successive stages of evolution, and human inventions, are all evidences of such novelties. The difference between those in the production of which man has had a hand and those in which he has not is, so far as we can see, simply that fact itself. In the former case the time-space order functions passively; in the latter individuals belonging to that order are expressing themselves as conscious purposive contributors to the story.

Once again it must be remembered that in nature we cannot draw clear-cut lines to make boundaries. It is difficult in these days to say anything about the difference between human beings and sub-human nature without someone in the audience getting up to say that he knows a horse that can count or a hen that can do something or other of the same kind. This is quite beside the point. The transition from passive functioning to active co-operation may be a very slow and gradual development, and the points we select as marking distinct stages may be as arbitrary as the action of a father when he says to his son: "You may do so and so when you are twelve years old," or of the law which fixes the date for "coming of age." Nevertheless there are very real differences between babyhood, boyhood and maturity. Now in the case before us, it might be possible to distinguish many different stages in the development, and for the purposes of other inquiries it might be necessary to do so. But for our purpose it is sufficient to distinguish between passive functioning (however far back lies the last pure instance of it) and active co-operation (however far ahead lies the full realisation of it).

It is argued by the behaviourist that the right way to obtain a true understanding of human activity is to view it from without as a detached observer. A human community thus viewed, he claims, appears just like an ant-heap or beehive. Why should we desire to think of them as any different? We should, I think, agree that he is right in holding that the two communities would look alike to the outside observer, adding that in our opinion the better the human community the more it would resemble the ants and bees. Nor should we deny the value of trying to view human life in this way; but we should point out that if we confine ourselves to this observation *ab extra*, we run the risk of missing the point of the process we are observing. Human society is in process of transition from functioning as a behaviouristic herd to the free co-operative activity of a truly social community. From the outside we might be able to notice the ordered dovetailing of the individual activities in

the herd, the disorderly maladjustments of the intermediate stages, and the regained order of the City of God. But only from within can we find the interpretation of the story, and know the significance of the changes through which creation is wrought out in time.

As was said above, there is no need, for our present purpose, to inquire closely about the extent to which progress has been made on the journey in various forms of animal life. Our point is that *in so far as* the individual member of a herd lacks full conscious awareness of the part it is playing in the social whole, and *in so far as* that part is not his own consciously given contribution, his movements are behaviouristically conditioned and controlled. Now it is characteristic of this behaviouristic mode of functioning that the individual is moved as it were from without, by an external force which pushes and pulls it along willy-nilly. At this level of behaviour there is no individual freedom, and everything is moved by the necessity of an external physical compulsion. Individual freedom begins when the individual, already so moved to conform with the movements of his fellows, becomes aware of the fact and able to carry on or contract out. Social co-operation is the voluntary co-operation of individuals consciously working for a common end. The secret of human life is to learn to pass from being externally¹ compelled to function as one of the herd to being internally moved to free co-operation with society.

We can see this process recapitulated in every generation. The relation of parents to children is one in which it is (or

¹ The words "externally" and "internally" are used for convenience and for want of better ones. It is not, of course, the localisation in space of the origin of the movement which is in question, but the degree in which it is the activity of a "self." In the events of levels where there is nothing to be called a self at all, it is clearly absurd to speak of that "self" being moved either from within or without. Where selfhood has begun to emerge, the developing self may be moved partially behaviouristically and partially freely. In so far as it functions behaviouristically I speak of it as "moved externally," even though the seat of the motion be within its organic constitution: in so far as it acts freely I speak of it as "moved internally," even though it be moving in response to the call of love from without.

should be) exhibited. No matter how great the love of the parent for the child, it must at first be moved externally and treated as a little machine. It has to be lifted from place to place, and stays where it is put. It has to be physically fed and otherwise attended to, and the more mechanically regular the routine, the better the results. But as the years go by, the external physical control of parent over child grows less and less, and all being well it passes over into a mutual understanding wherein son is proud of father and father of son, but neither thinks of trying to coerce the other into agreement with him.

If we "take time seriously" and recognise the coming into existence of novelties which may possibly behave in ways unlike those of previously existing things, we need not be surprised to find at the level of true social co-operation modes of personal intercommunion previously unexampled in the physical world. It is possible for the influence of one man's life on that of another to give him real help, and yet not to diminish but rather to increase his freedom. The influence of Brown over Jones may be such that the latter can say quite truly to Robinson: "But for Brown I could not be what I am," and can with equal truth repudiate the suggestion that Brown's influence has in any way diminished his own freedom. "On the contrary," he might say, "I am conscious of being the more free as a result of the help he has given me, and it is for this that I am especially grateful to him."

The first necessity for our thinking is that we should recognise this fact as a fact. It is time to emancipate ourselves from the hypnotic influence of the nineteenth century, which forbids us to accept as facts whatever cannot be "explained" in terms of physical necessity. Let it be that at lower levels of behaviour external compulsion and internal freedom are contradictory, the one to the other. We are aware in our own experience that this is not always so in human relationships, and as believers in the temporal reality of time we claim the right to compare spiritual things with spiritual. *At our level of experience* external help and internal

freedom may be the obverse and reverse sides of a single process.

Nor is this fact simply a brute unintelligible fact. The conception of a co-operative society of free beings is an intelligible conception, and a worthy object of creation for a Creator worthy of our worship. Unless, therefore, each man's inchoate freedom were to be developed by God in isolated independence from that of his fellows, there must emerge, at some stage or other in the creative process, just such mutual helpfulness as will promote and not hinder growth in freedom. It was argued in the last chapter that freedom as we have it now must pass away, either by sinking out of existence into the mechanistic order from which it sprang, or by rising into its consummation as the perfect freedom which "cannot sin." Growth in the inner freedom of self-control and moral achievement may change the nature of our freedom, but it changes it by perfecting it, not by destroying it; and any aid from others which would help onward that growth would be intelligible as an element entering into a complex social fact, consistent with the free response which it evoked. The facts observed at our level of experience are such as to encourage us to believe that this is the method actually germane to God's plan of creation, and, so interpreted, themselves appear somewhat less brutish.

It is clear that such thinkers as Professor Webb and Dr. John Oman are right when they suggest that it is along the lines of considerations such as these that we must approach the subject of God's grace.¹ "Grace" is the technical term for that divine help which enables a man to be and do what otherwise would be impossible for him. The danger to be avoided is that of regarding grace as a "something" detachable from God's living personal activity, and capable of working on its own as a kind of impersonal deputy for God—like the dictaphone which repeats a man's letters to his typist after he has gone out to play golf, or the

¹ See Webb: *Problems in the Relation of God and Man* (London, Nisbet, 1911); Oman: *Grace and Personality* (Cambridge University Press, 1919).

medicine which helps a patient between the doctor's visits. It has been well remarked that such interposition of a mediating "thing" in the relations of God and man represents a degradation of religion, and is a mark of its having succumbed to a standing temptation against which all religions need to be on their guard. "God's grace" is God in action regarded under the aspect of Helper, as God's love is God in action regarded under the aspect of Lover. His grace can no more be "reified" (as McDougall would say) than His love. The language of devotion which seems to imply that it can is best interpreted by reference to the language of letter-writing according to which we are frequently sending love by post. "With my love" means "I love you." "My grace is sufficient for thee" means "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing."¹

As in the personal relations between man and man, so, too, in the personal relations between God and man, God can really help and man be really helped, and yet there need be no setting aside of the man's freedom. Moreover, there is, as a matter of fact, less danger of God's grace interfering with human freedom than of man's influence. There is a way of influencing to action which *does* constrict freedom, and we are often tempted to use it in the wrong place. But God may be trusted never to misuse it. It is intriguing to notice on reflection that the truth about intercessory prayer is just the opposite of popular opinion. There is nothing more irritating than to be told by a pious friend who has failed in open argument or exhortation: "Well, good-bye—I'll pray for you." You feel that he is going to try to "get at" you by underhand means and influence you against your will when off your guard. But consider the matter from the other side. Imagine yourself possessed by the desire to prevail upon a man to do something, fully realising, however, that unless he did it of his own will it were better that he should not do it at all. Imagine yourself anxious lest there be anything in the alleged facts of telepathy which might

¹ John xv. 5.

give you a power of "getting at" him when off his guard. What greater safeguard could there be against this danger than to turn to God, putting the whole matter into the hands of One who may be relied upon not to insinuate into your friend's life any influence inconsistent with his growth in freedom?

The love-potion, whereby in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" Titania was induced to fall in love with ass-headed Bottom, reflects, without doubt, a popular belief of Shakespeare's day according to which love could be won by such means. To-day a young man who wished to woo a girl, and thought to do so by going to a drug store to buy a powder to be slipped in her tea when she was not looking, would rightly be thought a lunatic. We need to be careful not to retain in our religious thinking notions which we have abandoned elsewhere. If once upon a time love-potions were ever accepted instruments in human social intercourse, it may have been justifiable to think of sacraments after their analogy. There is no justification for such an approach to the subject of sacramental grace to-day.

Why should we ever feel a desire for such an approach? Two factors, I believe, combine to lead us into this temptation. The lingering influence of the outlook inherited from days when love-philtres were intellectually *comme il faut* unites with the nineteenth-century habit of finding in the mechanistic sequence of cause and effect the true home of *dependable* activity. Thus an illustration, based on the nineteenth-century outlook, whereby the sureness of sacramental grace is likened to the flowing of water or electric current from reservoir through appointed channels to where it is needed to nourish or empower, is in danger of speaking home to that in us which still would fain live in a world of love-philtres. We need to meditate on the true nature of our relations with our fellow-men, and on the truth that the goodness of God is the ground of His "dependability." We need to meditate on the difference between being drawn by love and driven by drugs. We need to remember that the Eucharist is the meeting-place of living Christians with

living Christ, and its grace the power that comes into human life through personal communion with such a Person. We shall not go wrong if we follow that strain in St. Augustine's teaching wherein the grace of God is defined as the love of God spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whereby we cry "Abba, Father!"¹ St. Paul went to the heart of the doctrine of grace when he said "The love of Christ constraineth us."²

II

The difficulties of the notion of Providence are notorious. The word is a religious word, and it expresses the religious man's faith that God watches over his ways and the ways of all creation, guiding the course of events in accordance with His will. So he prays that we may "do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in," and regards the situations in which he finds himself as "meant." Nevertheless, he clings to the conviction that many acts of his own and of his fellow-men, which have gone to the making of this "meant" situation, were free, were unpredictable until they were done, and in some cases were contrary to the will of God. How can this freedom be reconciled with God's providential care? How can foreknowledge be consistent with contingency?

Quite apart from the particular colour given to the problem through its religious associations, wherein it receives the name of Providence, the question of temporal contingency in relation to eternal determinateness provides (as was seen more than once in the last chapter) serious problems for secular philosophy. It is curious but true that, while this problem drives secular philosophy into religion in search of its solution, religion appears inhospitably to sharpen the difficulties rather than to remove them. To add the words "foreknown" and "preordained" to the impersonal "predetermined" seems but to hammer down the nails in the coffin of contingency. It is in its

¹ Cp. *De Spiritu et Littera*, passim.

² 2 Cor. v. 14.

theological form that the question must ultimately be faced.

Nevertheless, it will be well to begin with the problem of secular philosophy, the problem of contingency. The denial of contingency springs from accepting the principle that "the rational is the real," and interpreting it as meaning that whatever is irrational is really, *here and now*, something other than what it appears to be. The apparent mistake must be really the expression of "an unconscious purpose"¹; the apparently free act must be really the appropriate response of the organism to its environment. There is nothing which is not what it necessarily must be: otherwise it would be a "surd" in the system, the system would be irrational, and all thought would be impossible—

"Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with *Amaryllis* in the shade,
Or with the tangles of *Neæra's* hair?"

So dominant had the conviction become that whatever is necessarily must be so, that when at last the reaction against absolute idealism set in, and our attention was recalled to the duty of recognising such things as novelties in time, contingency, and "brute facts" as being what they are, there was need of exhibiting fallacious arguments whose fallacy was due to this conviction lurking unnoticed in the process of thought. In Oxford, the late Professor Cook Wilson used to examine the argument that "If x will happen to-morrow, it must be true to-day that x will happen to-morrow: therefore it must be determined to-day that x will happen to-morrow." He used to point out that this argument involves a confusion between two statements: (a) "It is true to-day that what will happen, will happen"; and (b) "Circumstances exist to-day which necessitate x happening to-morrow." The first statement—which is all that we are justified in making—signifies nothing *ad rem*, unless we identify it with the second, and to do this is to beg the very question at issue. At Cambridge Mr. G. E. Moore has

¹ Cp. Freud: *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920), Lecture II.

exhibited a similar fallacy, showing that an inability to recognise the existence of "mere matters of fact" has led to a confusion between "is now as a matter of fact" and "must necessarily be."¹ The mistake, the mere matter of fact, the contingent event—these all exist in time and space; how are they to be accounted for? If this spatio-temporal order of events is to be regarded as the self-manifestation of a rational reality, they *must* be explained away as in some sense unreal, and unreal here and now, as things which will turn out to be other than they appear when seen in the light of that eternal whole of which they are the partial manifestation.

It is the contention of certain thinkers to-day, notably Mr. A. N. Whitehead and Mr. Paul Elmer More (if I understand them rightly), that the universe is rational, but that its rationality is communicated to it by a God who Himself is the non-rational ground of the universal rationality.² In this they bear witness to what I believe to be true, that it is impossible to regard as rational both the here-and-now spatio-temporal order, and the eternal reality in which it is grounded. But I venture to think that they are mistaken in their opinion as to which of the two it is that is rational; that in truth it is the eternal reality which alone is through and through rational and thus intelligible, and that no philosophical system can exhibit this spatio-temporal universe as it stands as being rational and intelligible, because as it stands it is not so. Nevertheless, it is not unreal in the sense that it is a world of appearances which can be thought away; it is real with what may perhaps be called the temporal mode of reality as contrasted with the eternal. What is meant by the temporal mode of reality is that it is a process which has to be worked out in time before it can be thought through in the light of eternity and found intelligible.

But how can the rational eternal reality communicate to

¹ *Philosophical Studies* (London, 1922), X, on "External and Internal Relations."

² Cp. Whitehead: *Science in the Modern World* (New York, 1925), pp. 249-251; More; *Christ the Word* (Princeton, 1927), chaps. iii. and iv.

the spatio-temporal process a mode of reality which can pass through stages involving the existence of irrational elements? It is this question which drives philosophy to religion for its answer, for (as was argued in the last chapter) it is in the carrying out of rational acts of will, intelligible on the ground of their intrinsic value *as a whole*, that we find within our experience a place for contingency, for events intrinsically irrational but explicable as means towards the achieving of the intelligible end. It is thus by finding intelligent and intelligible personality in God, and regarding the spatio-temporal process as due to His *will*, that we can understand in some measure the function of those irrational events which are temporarily real and yet incapable of being established in eternity until transformed in time. To allow for this the Christian faith suggests the use of the metaphor "creation" to describe the relation between God and the spatio-temporal universe, the metaphor best suited to emphasise both the independence of the universe as spatio-temporal reality, and also its dependence on the will of the Eternal.¹

But now, as we have seen, our particular difficulty is sharpened, for when we think of the eternal reality as Eternal God, we must think of Him as eternally knowing the whole time-process, and eternally energising every moment of actuality on earth. With God omniscient and omnipotent, how can we avoid regarding the divine power and knowledge as inconsistent with earthly contingency?

The question whether God knows the details of the contingent is, of course, no new one. But it seems possible that our growing apprehension of what it means to "take time seriously" may throw some light upon it. If it means that we must regard the spatio-temporal universe as a sphere of reality within which contingent events and mere matters of fact have a true share in what we have called the

¹ On this whole subject see Mr. C. C. J. Webb's Gifford Lectures: *God and Personality* and *Divine Personality and Human Life* (London, 1918 and 1920), as well as Mr. Brabant's essay on *God and Time*, referred to on p. 90 above.

temporal mode of reality, then this belief will have its implications for our conception of God. For if what we are asserting is the temporal reality of the essentially unknowable, then it must be unknowable for God as well as for man. And it is just precisely this which is asserted. The absolute-idealist criticism of contingency was on the ground that nothing opaque to thought can be real; we have found ourselves driven to assert that there is a mode of reality open to things opaque to thought. It was of the essence of the argument that these things are not opaque to thought merely because seen from a finite standpoint in time, but intrinsically. They cannot be understood by being *seen* in the light of eternity, or as God sees them. They are not, here and now, really different from what they appear to be. They are what they are, and have to be *made* different before they can be seen as different. And if what they are is irrational, they are intrinsically unknowable, whether God or man be the would-be knower. To assert that God knows the contingent or the "mere matter of fact" is in fact to deny that they are what they are, *to deny their existence as truly contingent or truly "mere matter of fact,"* to argue an idealist position which underestimates the reality of time. If God's creative activity include the creation of contingent events, that means the creation of events opaque to His thought; this is one element in the Divine self-limitation involved in His creative activity.¹ God as well as man must "take time seriously."

But what then becomes of the religious demand for divine providential control over the events of human life in this world? What of the religious interpretation of situations as "meant"? To find an answer to these questions we must examine the ideas of providence and predestination directly from the religious point of view.

¹ In *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (ed. Rawlinson; Longmans, 1928) I have tried to show how this doctrine of God's self-limitation in creation is the necessary basis of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

III

The thought of predestination as meaning an arbitrary divine destining of certain men to eternal bliss and of certain others to eternal perdition, despite the prominent part it has played in the history of Christian thinking, need only be mentioned in order to be dismissed. Down at the roots of true religion, whether it be social or individual, there would seem to lie a conviction of being chosen or called by God. This brings with it the temptation to answer the question "Why am I called?" by "For my own benefit as contrasted with others," instead of by "For the glory and service of God."¹ Against the tendency to fall into this temptation on the part of the chosen people prophet after prophet has left his protests on record in the pages of the Old Testament. Our Lord still had to struggle with it in the days of His flesh, and the inability of the chosen people in His time to rise out of it was one of the chief reasons why official Judaism broke in His hand as an instrument for the setting up of the true Messianic Kingdom. Among the evil fruits of surrender to this temptation are morbid preoccupation with questions of soteriology, the thought of the Church as the Ark of Salvation, and the theory of predestination to eternal salvation or damnation.

Nevertheless the word "predestination" conveys to the religious mind an ineluctable truth. Apart from the question of how we interpret the purpose of our calling, the fact remains that no one of us, if he be honest, can ascribe his membership in the fellowship of Christ's Church entirely to his own agency. It was not of my doing that I was born of a Christian family in England and brought up in the Christian faith, so that when I became aware of myself I found myself an English Christian and not a Caribbean Voodooist or a Chinese Confucian. Nor can the man whose Christianity is due to an act of conscious adherence to the faith claim to have directed the circumstances which led to

On this subject see Dean Armitage Robinson's *Exposition of Ephesians i.* (Macmillan, 1909), and Dr. Kirk's Commentary on *Romans* in the Clarendon Bible (Oxford, 1937), pp. 119 ff.

his hearing the Gospel. In one way or another our religion has come to us rather than we to it; that is why we think of ourselves as called or chosen, and in thinking of ourselves as called or chosen we ascribe to God an activity anticipating in time our response to it. It was "in God's providence" that we were called to the knowledge of His grace and faith in Him. If the word "predestination" means anything, it means the conviction that God in His providence has a purpose or destiny for us which we discover rather than create. From moment to moment our lives are in His hand. The situations in which we find ourselves are "meant," and it is for us to discover their meaning, which is God's meaning. This is the religious interpretation of life. How can it be the true one?

The thought of God as a kind of celestial chess-player moving His pieces about on the surface of the earth is adequate neither for science, philosophy nor religion. Religion, as was pointed out at the very beginning of this chapter, insists that man has more freedom than a pawn even while insisting that his time is in God's hand.

If our previous argument may be trusted, we have discovered two modes in which God does actually enter into and control the course of events in this world of time and space. In the physical order His control is absolute and what we call mechanistic. The "uniformity of nature" reflects the fulfilment of the will of God through passive matter. In human life the control is by grace, and is thus conditioned by that condition intrinsic to God's creative purpose, the purpose of creating free beings to co-operate with Him and respond to His love.¹ Every event which occurs in human life occurs as a result of the interaction of these three factors, natural law, human freedom and divine grace, and it is *within this interaction* that God's providence must be thought of as operative. The spatio-temporal universe as a whole owes its existence to God's will and depends upon

¹ It should not be necessary again to point out that this distinction is not invalidated by the recognition of intermediate stages in which it may be difficult to discover which element is the more prominent.

Him, but He has made it *as it is*, and to control the course of events within the system he enters in and works in accordance with the nature of that process *as He has made it*. It contains mere matters of fact, contingency, unpredictable events. He has made it so, and is without repentance. But He comes within and from the inexhaustible resources of His omnipotence triumphs over every possible obstacle to the completion of His plan.

Within the spatio-temporal universe the form taken by God's omnipotence is the power to rise above all circumstances and to turn them to good account, to make them minister to the fulfilment of His will. The classical example of this is, of course, the Cross. Sin's triumph turns out to be God's victory, and the day of crucifixion is celebrated throughout the Christian world as *Good Friday*. The Christian life is a life based on a venture of faith: "No circumstances are too much for God, therefore no circumstances are too much for me if I walk through life hand in hand with God." Conviction of the truth of the Christian view of life comes from making this venture of faith and verifying it in experience. But it is our part here to reflect upon it in thought.

Once again, the question at issue is of what it means to "take time seriously." Reasons have been given for suggesting that it means regarding this universe as containing realities which, being as they stand irrational and unintelligible, have to be *made* different before they can be seen differently and so truly known. We are in the midst of a creative process, surrounded by raw materials to be used in its further continuance. What is it that is in process of being created? The Christian hypothesis is that it is a society of finite individual beings each perfectly free and all united in perfect voluntary co-operation. The Christian claim is that the acceptance of this hypothesis enables us, as no other hypothesis does, to find some meaning in the given facts of scientific, historical and personal experience without having to resort to distorting them or explaining them away.

The very heart of the matter is the question of freedom. If what God really cares about above all things is the eliciting of perfect freedom, and if the manner of its eliciting be that which I have been trying to describe, then His purpose demands that His control shall be a control which is consistent with it. The plan demands that when creation arrives at the human level, there shall "emerge" individual self-conscious beings who shall have a hand in their own making and in that of society. At that level God continues to elicit true freedom by the help of His grace. But as true freedom is only to be won through moral progress, man has the choice either by co-operation with God to become a rational being capable of the eternal mode of reality, or to sink back into the impersonal mechanistic order from which he has come. The future is in process of creation, and men are fellow-workers with God in the process. That which is made capable of partaking in the eternal mode of reality will endure; that which is made otherwise will pass away.

On the basis of this position we may attempt to interpret what the religious man means when he regards a given situation as "meant." Every situation is an opportunity for further creative activity in co-operation with God; in every situation God has a meaning for us to find, but it can only be found in the activity of making it come true. Life comes to us as plastic raw material, not as finished product, and it has to be fashioned before it can be understood. It is the raw material out of which spiritual realities are to be created. The spirit is not an alien kind of "stuff" imprisoned in the material; in this world the spatio-temporal realities are the stuff of which the spiritual life is in process of being made. As a sculptor might see that a certain piece of marble was "just asking to" be made into a certain kind of statue, so the man whose life is lived in communion with God might see that a certain situation was "just asking to" be treated as the raw material for the creation of a certain kind of spiritual reality.

There is a story of a man who prayed earnestly one morning for grace to overcome his besetting sin of impatience.

A little later he missed a train by half a minute and spent an hour stamping up and down the station platform in furious vexation. Five minutes before the next train came in he suddenly realised that here had been the answer to his prayer. He had been given an hour to practise the virtue of patience; he had missed the opportunity and wasted the hour. There are also many stories of men who have similarly missed trains which have been wrecked, and who ascribe their escape to Providence. If they are combining the thought of God as the celestial chess-player with the thought of God as pre-eminently concerned in their enjoyment of earthly life at the expense of others, there is not much to be said for their point of view. But if they are humbly acknowledging a call to further service on earth before they pass beyond, they are rightly interpreting their escape. In all probability all the events which led up to all these men missing their various trains could be adequately accounted for in terms of the interaction of natural law, human freedom and divine grace. But at every point within that interaction God sees what are its possibilities for good, and the man who shares His enlightenment and His power and gives himself to make that good come true, has found the meaning of that moment and his "special providence." The gates of the future are indeed open, the universe is in the making. But only if made aright can the making stand. To make it awry may delay the final consummation, but God has no need of hurry. It is to the quality of the developed freedom that He looks, and He grudges no time in its creation. The end is sure, for He who at every moment in the process sees its possibilities for good is God omnipotent—omnipotent to turn all circumstances to good account, to turn to-day's defeat into to-morrow's victory. But this omnipotence will never be so exercised as to substitute the external compulsion of men for the internal eliciting of their freedom. It is freedom that is being created, and by the conditions of its creation its Creator abides.

I have tried elsewhere¹ to show how the recognition of

¹ *And Was Made Man*, chap. v.

this plastic quality of life, considered with reference to the crucial instance of pain, throws light on the problems of forgiveness and atonement; and I shall have something more to say about it in the next chapter.

There is perhaps no finer description of the religious attitude to life than the words of de Musset: "Les douleurs passagères blasphèment et accusent le ciel; les grandes douleurs n'accusent ni le blasphème, elles écoutent." It is the "listening" attitude which finds the meaning. This discussion of Providence began by asking whether the idea of Providence tenable in accordance with our philosophy would be recognisable as that implied in the religious man's convictions. I would like to end it by asking whether the true basis of these convictions is not the experience of those who have seized the opportunity, redeemed the time, and thereby found the meaning? It is these men and women who, looking backwards, see that the thing was "meant." Others, realising too late that they had missed the moment of opportunity, may with equal truth lament the fact that there was a meaning they had failed to grasp—asserting by that phrase just the very plasticity of the future for which I am contending. *Fronte capillata est, post est occasio calva* Superstitious parodies of this truly religious trust in God provide us with no obligation to attempt their philosophical justification.

IV

To regard the eliciting of true finite freedom through the process necessary for its perfection as the purpose of creation suggests certain practical considerations which are worthy of attention. Embedded in the course of the discussion throughout this chapter and the last are six fundamental tenets which may now be summarised:

1. Personal goodness, whether of God or man, is nothing but *free* self-expression in acts either themselves intrinsically worth while or contributory to what is intrinsically worth while.

2. The performance of such acts on the part of man tends to promote his growth in freedom; the performance of contrary acts tends to hinder it.

3. An act may be deficient in either (a) voluntariness, or (b) the quality of being worth while; that is to say (a) the right thing may be done, but done for some other reason than the free choice of it, or (b) the wrong thing may be done of free choice.

4. Man is in process of emerging from a state of passive conformity with the immanent energy of the universe, through a state of becoming aware of what is going on and of himself as a potential co-operator in the process, into the actualisation of that potentiality. In this middle stage he has to develop his freedom by asserting it in the creation of what is worth while. If he fails either (a) to assert it at all, or (b) to assert it in the right direction, he fails in one of two mutually complementary necessities.

5. A man's environment at the human stage of his development consists of (i) created nature continuing to function at the levels from which he has emerged; (ii) other human beings like unto himself; and (iii) God. Towards (i) a man's attitude may be that of exercising external control; towards (ii) it should be that of developing personal relationships and eliciting freedom; towards (iii) it should be that of personal loving self-devotion.

6. God offers to man, in his relationship with (i) and (ii), the opportunity of playing a co-operative part in the work of creation.

If these tenets be accepted as well grounded in a reasonable interpretation of the universe, then it is clear that great practical problems arise in connection with numbers three, four and five.

In considering that relationship between man and man which we described as "influence," we distinguished between the power one man has of externally "conditioning" another after the manner advocated by the behaviourists, and the power of "internally" helping him by developed personal intercourse. Without doubt there is a standing

temptation to all men who are interested in reforming, improving, or uplifting their fellows to adopt the more immediately easy method of the behaviourist and to forget the worthlessness of any priestcraft which fails to be true to St. Paul's principle: "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."¹ We have to remember, for instance, that our conduct of public worship must aim at eliciting every worshipper's free conscious self-devotion to God rather than at conditioning him by means of external surroundings to go through the emotional motions of worship and nothing more. From this we might hastily conclude that such external conditioning is always wrong, that the puritan director of worship is right in insisting that if a man shall not worship in the most unhelpful conditions he shall not worship at all, and that we must live continually in the spirit of the man who prays lest his will should influence that of his fellow-men in any other way than that of consciously received influence. But the problem of life is not so simple as this.

We have seen how in the relationship of parents to children the mode of intercourse should pass by gradual and often imperceptible stages from that of "external" control to that of "internal" help. Almost every variety of influence between the two extremes may have its right exercise at the appropriate stage. But this is true not only in this particular relationship, but in many others. For there are men and women who represent every conceivable stage in the development from behaviourist functioning to free self-expression, and their actual achievement in this by no means always coincides with their age in years. Nor are their physical parents the only members of society who can stand in this matter *in loco parentis* towards them. It may be that in one case a man is right to condition his neighbour after the manner of the behaviourist, because that is at the moment

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 2.

the manner of help he needs, while in another case to do so would be to do gross violence to his growing manhood. In particular, any man whose duty it is to exercise leadership among his fellows—be it pastoral, political, industrial or of any other kind—must continually be having to face the question of what kind of influence the occasion demands.

These problems, provided by the fifth of our fundamental tenets, are further complicated by contributions from the third and fourth. The ideal is that the right thing should be done freely. In this particular case, is it better that the right thing should be done, no matter how, or that a certain individual's freedom should be given its chance, at no matter what cost to society? And from the point of view of that individual's own development, is practice in the habit of doing what is right, or in the habit of asserting his freedom, the more needed at this point in his career? If in this case there has to be deficiency on one side or the other, on which side shall it be? These two "poles" in the constitution of the perfect freedom to which we aspire provide for us on our journey a standing tension. It is the condition of our continuing to travel that we resolve the tension in one case only to be faced by the necessity of a fresh act of resolution in the next.

I do not see that there is any way of laying down any rule of thumb by which such problems can be solved in advance. If the passing of time presents us with situations as the plastic raw material for our creative activity, there is no escape from the conclusion that life is an art, and demands the artist's intuition of all who would live aright. The most that can be said is that if we are convinced of the main thesis of this chapter and the last—that the purpose of creation is the eliciting of perfect human freedom—then we must never be false to this aim, never allow the easier method of conditioning behaviour to be a *substitute* for the more difficult method of winning free response. Where either is equally possible, the latter must be chosen. The former is only justifiable in order to clear away obstacles in the way of the latter, or to restore the balance of a one-

sided development. Skilful staging of the externals of public worship is justifiable as a means to set free the spirit of man for fuller self-devotion to God. It is probable that in the more darkly Satanic districts of our modern industrial towns a greater degree of conditioning is needed than in that little Cornish church where an endowed benefaction secures that clear glass in the window by the departed donor's seat shall always give his successor in that pew an unobstructed vision of the countryside.

These problems press with special force, as has been said, on those who are called to leadership. They have to face continual temptation to run other people's lives for them. Some of us err by under-exercising our power to condition our fellows, cloaking our cowardice under the guise of an exaggerated respect for their freedom. Others err by trampling underfoot the demands of that freedom, content if they succeed in regimenting their fellows into marching along the straight and narrow way. And it is not only those who in a special sense are leaders that have to find their way through this problem. All men are social animals, and there is no one of us who can for ever avoid facing the question "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The responsibility is great. But if there is any meaning in the ancient words which speak of man being made in God's image, it is that man is given by God a co-operative share in His creative activity, and he must rise up to this responsibility if he is to become himself. This leads us to the thought that in God's relationship to us there must be still much of the external conditioning as well as of the control through "grace." We cannot trace the finger of God *only* in those influences which we receive through our conscious personal communion with Him. He is moulding and shaping us in all our behaviouristic development before we ever become aware of what is going on. And still we may need more of such conditioning than we can know. But we may be sure that neither in the past, nor in the present, nor in the future can that conditioning be thought of as constricting our true growth in freedom. In so far as it is

due to His direct willing it is developing in us the nature of finite beings capable of freedom; in so far as our freedom is constricted by external conditioning it is due to the misuse of their creative power by our fellow-creatures, and here the omnipotence of God is made ours through grace to transform even such constriction into the means of its own defeat.

If this be true, then there is no more mistaken approach to the problem of the miraculous than that which regards God as reserving to Himself a right to interfere in human life which he has renounced in respect of the "laws" of the physical world. It would appear more reasonable to regard the physical order as the passive instrument of God's will aiming at the creation of free beings. It can be controlled as they can not, and there would be no irrationality in accepting adequate evidence that it had sometimes deviated from its commonly observed uniform manner of behaviour, if that deviation could be thought of as fulfilling the aim of the whole process—the eliciting of perfect finite freedom. It is not without significance that He whom we believe to have been God incarnate thought of the power over storms and bread and mountains as lying in His hands, but of men as those into whose hands He was to give the power over Himself.

CHAPTER VII

COMPROMISE, TENSION AND PERSONALITY

I

IT is sometimes said that the idea of personality is the master key with which to solve the problems of the universe. It may be so; but when the nature of the key turns out itself to be one of the most baffling of the problems, its use as an instrument is not so simple after all. Indeed the word "personality" is one of those slippery words of which one has to be perennially cautious, one of those words which mean one thing at one time and another at another, one thing to this man and another to that. Perhaps it is just because of this that it often seems to provide us with so satisfying a solution of profound mysteries, for it buries them in the depths of its own indeterminateness. It is therefore necessary for anyone who would use the word as a counter in the philosophical exchange to scrutinise it very carefully and declare openly with all possible accuracy just what it is intended to convey.

On the other hand, when a straightforward, non-philosophical Christian says that he believes in a God who is personal, there is not much doubt about what he has in mind. He distinguishes between persons and things. The former are beings like himself, capable of making up their minds to do things and then doing them, towards whom he acts as fellow human beings. The latter have no minds to make up, and move not of their own will but willy-nilly in an ordered system of cause and effect. When he speaks of God as personal he means that the source and ground of all things, and the true object of worship, is One better thought of after the analogy of a person than of a thing, after the analogy of one who knows what it is to make up his mind to do things, and to explain why he did them in terms which imply reliance on other men's capacity to

understand the grounds on which he thought them worth doing.

Let us, then, take as our starting-point this one prominent element in human personality, the capacity to run our lives on the basis of deciding what is worth doing and then setting ourselves to do it. This capacity is, of course, something which we need to develop and strengthen as life goes on. It exists in very varying degrees in different cases. But to be entirely without it would be to lack one of the distinctive characteristics of human beings, who may be thought of fundamentally as growing in the extent to which they direct their lives in accordance with the conscious pursuit of what is recognised as worth while.

This leads at once to the question, What is worth while? As soon as that question is raised the study of ethics is in existence, a study which now has a long history and is not ended yet. The first and most obvious answer to give is to say Pleasure, and this answer is given both by ethics in its infancy and by each individual human infant when he first begins to run his own life. But the true beginning of the serious study of ethics comes with realisation of the inadequacy of this answer, with the apprehension of the clash between what is pleasant and what is truly worth while. At a much later stage comes the discovery that no satisfactory answer can be given in terms of self-interest of any kind whatsoever. At this point it is necessary not to be led astray by the ambiguity latent in the use of the word "satisfy." It is true that in searching for what is worth while man is searching for that which will satisfy him as an end to live for. From this it might be concluded that since he is seeking for what will satisfy him, the answer must be in terms of self-interest. But this is a merely verbal sophistication, and to learn to see one's way through it might well be called the *pons asinorum* of ethics. When we pass from words to facts we are faced with a truth which, though paradoxical in words, is a commonplace in experience. Only that will satisfy man which is not sought because it will satisfy. What he needs is a cause objectively existent

and greater than himself, to which he can devote himself because, no matter what may become of him, its victory must be secured. Anyone who has ever played football knows by experience something of the truth of this, or at least has caught a glimpse of what that experience might be, could he conquer himself sufficiently to enter into it. It is in such experiences that man rises to the heights of his capacity, and becomes aware of a satisfactoriness in life and a happiness of which, perhaps, he had never dreamed.

There is something in man, then, which will not be satisfied by anything less than an objective cause into which he can throw himself because its victory is supremely worth while. From this point of view the whole human race appears as needing this, though with very varying degrees of awareness of their need and of its nature. Some are still at the pleasure stage, others, having passed beyond that, are still pursuing their own interest in some form or other. Many others have discovered the futility of this, and are frankly puzzled what to put in its place.

It is no use pretending that the problem is an easy one to solve. What is really worth while? The Roman poet essayed an answer when he said *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*, but a few centuries later another poet had seen the hollowness of this hope and dismissed the spur of fame as "the last infirmity of noble mind." We look back over our lives, and see the alternating periods, the happy stimulating days when we had something to live for alternating with a curious sense of emptiness when the longed-for end had been achieved. At one time, perhaps, it was some examination before us which filled the horizon, at another the gaining of a place in some athletic team, at another the appointment to some position or other, at another the passing of some measure by a governmental body. In this way we learned the need of some unifying aim or purpose which should not be exhausted in any one particular achievement in time; and even when we have discovered the need of this, there remain problems enough when we ask by what particular acts it is best to be pursued. Is it more worth

while for the scholar-priest to follow the example of Browning's grammarian and rigidly to limit himself to the pursuit of his own main line of study in the hope that by so doing he may eventually some day make some contribution to human knowledge, or to turn aside to preach sermons and write ephemeral papers, or to be at the disposal of anyone who may come in to consult him at any hour of the day or night? Moreover, what of the multitudes who are never conceited enough to raise any such questions concerning themselves, but are contented to live and die like the subject of Gray's "Elegy"? And, still further, what of those who have given their lives in wholehearted devotion to some cause which ends in failure, who in their old age live to see all that they had toiled for tumble to pieces and be laid in the dust? How can we find some conception of what is worth while in life which is adequate to act as a unifying principle for all lives at all times under all conditions?

It is clear that the cause for which we are to live and die must be one which both transcends the order of time and space and is yet capable of embodiment in particular temporo-spatial acts. It must transcend them each and all because we need it to give them, each and all, the quality of being worth while; for the pursuit of a "worth-whileness" entirely within time and space will crown achievement not with satisfaction but with "slump." Yet it must not be such that it is indifferent to the particular acts in and through which it is served by man; it evacuates life of all meaning to treat the particular events of which it is made up as extrinsic means to an end in no way immanent in themselves.

The Christian view of the purpose of life as the embodiment on earth of the transcendent realities of beauty, truth and goodness makes its appeal just because of this fundamental fact of man's nature, his need of a cause which can be served in and through the events of his earthly life, but so that in each achievement he achieves something not wholly comprised in the particular act but for eternity. In order to understand the significance of this view it is

necessary to reflect upon what happens in detail in any attempt to carry it into practice.

II

From our point of view as living within the time series the true life of man would seem to be essentially creative. Whether it would so appear *sub specie aeternitatis* is a question which for the present we may well leave on one side. The important thing is to recognise that in the course of the history of our lives in time novelties do occur which, so far as the time series is concerned, are truly new, and which we have a hand in creating. Moreover, these novelties, while created out of and embodied in the things of earth, are valuable just in so far as they embody what is transcendently worth while. Out of the block of marble comes the statue and is embodied in it; out of the scraping of string on string comes the music, embodied in the vibrations that contact sends forth. As we listen to it, are we seeking for an escape from the world of reality in an unreal world of phantasy, or are we lifted up for a while into that truly real world for which we are made, for want of whose life we are restless until we find rest in it? It is the affirmation of our faith that in this experience in time of communion with the beauty embodied in the things of time we catch a glimpse of the celestial world of timeless reality.

But it is not only through artistic creation that man creates on earth embodiments of eternity. There are other elements in the heavenly world which can on this earth be embodied in events of time and space, such as justice, freedom, brotherhood, and love. Out of the circumstances of our earthly life we may create the earthly embodiments of these heavenly realities, using danger as the raw material of courage, suspense as that of perseverance, disappointment of patience, success of gratitude and humility. Business contacts are the stuff out of which brotherhood and honesty are to be created, and politics provide the medium for the creator of social justice. So the list might be indefinitely

extended. Of course, like the artist, we need our technique, we need to know and respect the "laws" in accordance with which our raw material can be worked. The well-meaning fool may be almost as great a danger as the clever knave, and idealistic aims must never be *substituted* for the diligent pursuit of such disciplines as history, psychology, economics and other sciences. But, in order that we may not lose the full fruit of these studies, we must never forget that the call to creative activity, to the creation of earthly embodiments of heavenly realities, is the true secret of human life. The extent to which each action exhibits the quality of novelty varies. Actions differ in scale in degrees of novelty, to which corresponds a scale of degrees of creative intensity. It is true that every human action is a unique event, and no human action is devoid of the quality of novelty. Still a great proportion of our lives is occupied in more or less routine activities, or in meeting certain standard situations in which there is no question as to the right creative response. We follow precedent and reproduce anew what has been done before. But this must not blind us to the fact that with the passing of time fresh circumstances are continually arising, and at any moment there may come into the present from the womb of the future an unprecedented situation which calls for an unprecedented creative act, in which the element of novelty is at its highest and the creative self-expression most intense. In the more straightforward normal stretches of life we must keep alive our sense of the novelty and creativeness of human action, keeping ourselves in training for the great moment when it comes, lest coming suddenly it find us sleeping. "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

To explain life in terms of what is worth while is to give an account of how out of earthly circumstances can be created in space and time embodiments of heavenly realities.

III

When we ask what are the conditions most conducive to

the exercise of this creative activity we are faced by the fact that they are conditions of conflict or tension. It is the unsolved puzzle, the unreconciled contradiction, which calls forth our creative response. We can see it at work in the crossword fiend who will get out his pencil and paper if given an inch of elbow-room in a crowded train, or in the golf maniac who is never so happy as when coaxing a little white ball into a hole from which he promptly removes it. Is there any joy more characteristically human than the joy of meeting problems which elicit our creative activity in devising their solutions? I well remember the enthusiasm with which a certain mechanic whom I once met talked of his work. He was in the repair department of a large factory, and his duty was to go when summoned and deal with any break-downs in machinery that might have occurred. What gave the work its fascination was that he was continually being called upon to deal with machines that he had never seen before. It was "up to" him from his general knowledge of machinery to discover and put right the cause of failure, and in the continual challenge of new problems calling for new solutions he found his joy in his work.

From this point of view it is remarkable how fertile is this world we live in in providing ethical problems rather than solutions. Is it not, indeed, characteristic of our experience that we are continually being called upon to face apparent antinomies which persist from generation to generation, ever calling anew to be solved *ambulando* and remaining to provide new problems for successive ages? We have only to think of the rival claims of the world-affirming and the world-denying elements in religion, of the tension between religion and morality, of the demands of authority and freedom, of the conflicting loyalties to Church and State, of the necessity to Christianity of both its Catholic and its Protestant "moments," or of that profoundly illuminating reflection of Baron von Hügel that "Jesus cures pain and disease as though they could not be utilised, whilst Jesus also trains and empowers souls to utilise their sufferings as though they were incurable."

Now what may perhaps be called a static or mechanistic logic is impatient of all such antinomies, and demands an immediate "either or" solution of them. But such a logic is inadequate for human life at its best. What is needed is a dynamic or personal logic, for which one element in being a "person" is to be, as it were, a focal point where various claims come together and require on our part the creative act of imposing upon them a solution which is worth while. This creative activity is most intense, and human life rises to its greatest heights, in cases where no following of precedent or application of predetermined rule can tell us what to do—where we have to launch out into the deep and boldly invent a solution in which the quality of novelty is at its highest degree, as when Dr. Cram, faced by the problem of covering with a Gothic tower a space larger than ever before presented to the designer of such a building, created that new thing in Gothic architecture, the glorious tower which one day shall crown the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York.

In his interesting and valuable treatment of the ethics of compromise¹ Dr. Kirk approaches this view of the matter, but he does not seem to me to recognise sufficiently clearly the intrinsic importance of tension in the structure of things as the necessary ground of our highest human activity. It is surely necessary to distinguish between compromise which is a refusal to choose where choice ought to be made, and maintenance of tension as the condition of a series of creative acts. It is just because this pain must be cured and that endured, because on this occasion we must support Church against State and on that support State against Church, because here we must defer to authority and there assert our freedom, and because until the particular circumstances have arisen it is impossible to lay down in advance what the right action will be, that life is such as to offer to us continually fresh opportunities for the exercise of our highest human creative activity.

I have suggested that whatever else may be included in

¹ See *Conscience and its Problems* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1927), pp. 362–368.

the conception of human personality, one highly significant element in the being of a human person is to be one who, when faced by the tension of conflicting demands, neither of which can be in principle denied *in toto*, is called upon to exercise creative activity in the devising of actions that are worth while as embodiments on earth of heavenly realities. If, then, we are to think of God as in any way "personal," this will surely imply, at least, that we think of Him in His relations with us as sharing in these interests, and as Himself acting on grounds of what is "worth while," rather than by analogy from the impersonal laws of nature or "static logic." It is in this way that our religion has always thought of God. We see this in the Living God of the Old Testament and the God who is Love of the New, and it is significant that two recent writers reaffirm the demand for a conception of God which shall carry on this tradition. Thus in "Reality" the late Dr. Streeter wrote: "Just so far as it seems to be a necessity for thought to conceive the Power behind phenomena as concretely personal, I submit that the anthropomorphism of Jesus is intellectually in advance of the rationalised abstractions of a Hegel, a Haeckel or a Herbert Spencer," and Dr. Rawlinson makes a similar affirmation of belief at the end of his Bampton Lectures. I suggest that a corroborative line of argument in support of this position may be based on our recognition of these antinomies or tensions as permanent elements embodied in the structure of the world in which as creative beings we find ourselves called upon to live. A static logic may find in them obstacles to the rationality of the universe, but a deeper insight can see in them evidence that what the Author and Source of all being cares about is our exercise of our highest activities, and that He has so devised the circumstances of our life as to elicit from us the response for which He looks.

PART III

TOWARDS A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER VIII

THE WITNESS OF FAITH

I

THERE were three forces at work in the break-up of the mediaeval synthesis. We have considered two: the growth of interest in natural science as an autonomous department of learning, and the concentration of philosophers on the problem of knowledge. But we have not as yet said anything about the religious Reformation, with its renewed insistence upon the Christian gospel as a divine revelation making demands upon human life. To this we must now turn our attention. I have already spoken of my conversation with a Lutheran friend, and of his insistence that the Reformation was essentially a breaking with the philosophical element in Catholicism, and have suggested that if the philosophy of the mediaeval synthesis was found inadequate to the needs of the Christian religion, this should lead to the quest for a more satisfactory philosophy rather than to the repudiation of philosophy altogether. We must now try to approach this quest from the standpoint neither of scientific investigation nor of epistemology but of Christian faith.

In their immediate insistence on Christianity as the proclamation of a divine revelation rather than as a philosophical interpretation of the universe the reformers were reverting to the position of the Christian preachers of the earliest centuries of our era. It is the part of religion, as of science, to provide material for philosophy to weave into its systems, and whenever it appears to religious readers or scientists

that the truths for which they stand are ignored, obscured, distorted or denied by the dominant system of their time, they must protest. The philosophy dominant at the beginning of our era had been broken up by the insistence of Christians that it should find room for the revealed truth to which they bore witness, and now again Christians and scientists revolted against a system which had outgrown its usefulness and stood in the way of men learning what they had to teach. So far as the history of thought is concerned, the significance of the reformers is that they fulfilled the true function of religious leaders in demanding that attention should be paid to the pure and uncorrupted Word of God.

There can be no doubt that the cardinal principle of the Reformation was the assertion of the primacy of the Word of God. "*The Christian Church is there where the Word of God is rightly taught.* Here, at the moment when the churches of the West singled out the basic principle of evangelicalism, it was declared with all possible distinctness that the Word of God stands above the Church, that the Church is born out of the Word of God, and that the Word of God has the last and highest authority for the Church."¹

But what was then meant, what since that time has been meant, and what should now be meant by this phrase "the Word of God"? These questions are more easily asked than answered.

It is clear that whatever we may mean by "the Word of God," we are referring in some sense or other to the Bible. The question is, in what sense. I propose to say little or nothing about one view which has been held, that which is commonly referred to as "fundamentalism." The notion that the Bible is a verbally inspired complete manual of instruction on history, science, philosophy and religious doctrine is one which did not need to wait for modern criticism in order to be refuted. A very little study of the

¹ From a paper read by Professor H. Sasse in 1934 to the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, and summarised in Faith and Order Pamphlet, No. 71, p. 16.

writings of the reformers is enough to show that none of them ever consistently held to this view in practice, however much some of them may have thought that they were doing so. For the differences between them appear in the form of rival interpretations of the Bible, and to find the true source of their doctrine we have to ask what it was that led them to find in the Bible this or that message for mankind. This is true of us all; what we find in the Bible depends on the presuppositions with which we come to the Bible. Whence come these presuppositions?

This question has recently been forced anew upon my mind by the reading of Professor Emil Brunner's book "The Mediator."¹ It was clear from the start that in writing the book Professor Brunner was intending to expound biblical theology; but the further I read, the more convinced I became that his conception of God differed in important respects from the God of the biblical revelation. I was therefore driven to ask myself whence it came that Brunner and I read the Bible so differently, and the conclusion to which that questioning has led me is this. It is not that one of us is a biblical theologian while the other is not. It is not that one of us has faith while the other has not. We are both of us biblical theologians and men of faith. The difference between us is a philosophical difference. Professor Brunner's theology involves certain metaphysical assumptions concerning the nature of God and the universe, which influence his interpretation of the Bible, assumptions which are not derived from the Bible nor involved in the nature of Christian faith, but belong to a philosophical dogmatism which has not sufficiently criticised its own presuppositions.

With most of what Professor Brunner has to say in his first two chapters I am in entire and hearty agreement. He is surely right in pointing out that Christianity is essentially based on a revelation which is a once-for-all act of God in Christ requiring of man the response of faith; that this faith, which is personal self-surrender to the redeeming

¹ English translation, London, 1934.

God, the acknowledgment of sinfulness and acceptance of forgiveness, is something quite different from giving assent to certain timeless general truths about God and the universe; and that it is therefore a complete misunderstanding of the Christian revelation to regard the sacred history as no more than a means through which certain truths about God have reached the mind of man. Further, I am in entire and hearty agreement with him in all that he says later on in the book about Christianity being bound up with the conviction that Jesus Christ is not to be accounted for as the fine flower of humanity's evolutionary development; He must be acknowledged as God eternal breaking into the course of the history of this time-space universe from outside.

Here, and in much else that he writes, Professor Brunner bears sterling witness to the true nature of Christianity. But he is not content to bear this witness. He also draws deductions from it which are not necessitated by it and have their roots elsewhere.

Professor Brunner apparently holds that because Christian faith is personal self-surrender and acknowledgment of sinfulness, the Christian revelation cannot also perform the function assigned to revelation in other religions and fulfil the aspirations of man's reason in its quest for timeless truth about God. The eye of faith is indeed able to interpret history as reason without faith cannot, but the sum total of what it can learn is that man is sinful and deserves God's wrath, and that God in Christ offers forgiveness instead. To go on from this and see in the divine revelatory acts a fulfilment and confirmation of all that human reason postulates in God of logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness, and through it to find a meaning and a purpose in creation, is to corrupt faith and to surrender to arrogant pretensions of reason.¹

¹ Similarly, Professor Sasse writes: "The proclamation of the 'accidental historical truths' of the dying and rising again of Jesus Christ . . . spoke of a solitary unique occurrence, of a revelation which had once taken place, not of one which always and everywhere occurs. From this message no religious-moral truth is to be derived. One can express in the form of general propositions the content of all other 'revelations' of the history of religions;

Why is this? Surely because in Professor Brunner's mind the scope of the Divine revelatory acts is limited in accordance with certain timeless general truths of reason which are the most fundamental elements in his thought. On p. 26, for example, he argues as follows: "If some historical event could be proved to have taken place once for all, it would be an absolutely decisive event. Such an event, however, cannot be discovered within history; for if such an event could be discovered, it would be the end of all history, the 'fullness of time.'"¹ I am not quite sure what this means, but I am quite sure that, whatever it means, it is a bit of abstract rational argumentation, not derived from but applied to the biblical revelation. From whatever source it is derived, from the same source, presumably, Professor Brunner derives the canons whereby he prescribes to God what must be the divine reaction to sin in creation, and the

for the scope of the revelation there means always the recognition of one or another theoretical truth. One cannot express the content of the Biblical revelation in any theoretical proposition, neither in a proposition about divine or human life, nor in the formula 'the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man.' "

In many passages Professor Brunner speaks of reason as being proud. But this is surely an unjustified personification of it. Strictly speaking, one cannot speak of reason or faith, but only of men and women, as being proud or humble. A proud man will reason proudly and a humble man humbly. Nor, unfortunately, are all men of faith always humble.

¹ The preceding words are: "The distinction between the historical and the natural element lies in the fact that the historical event can only happen once; it cannot be repeated. But in History, as we know it, this absolute historical element does not exist; all that it possesses is the tendency towards that which cannot be repeated (*Einmaligkeit*). Just as Nature is not wholly without the tendency towards that which cannot be repeated, so also History contains some elements which recur. The distinction between History and Nature consists in the tendency to non-repetition. The distinction is, however, not absolute; therefore History has an aspect of natural law, and Nature has an historical aspect." A more thoroughgoing analysis of this problem is to be found in L. S. Thornton: *The Incarnate Lord*, chapters ii and iv, in the light of which Professor Brunner's denial of any genuine historicity in the time process, and his contentment with the vague phrase "tendency to non-repetition" appear very unsatisfactory.

A similar lack of thoroughgoing analysis is found in many passages where Professor Brunner accepts as self-explanatory the distinction between differences of kind and differences of degree, without any discussion of the difficulties involved in the nature of that distinction itself. Cp. pp. 168-70.

effect of that sin on human reason. Wrath is the only attitude allowed to God towards all mankind except that small minority which consciously accepts forgiveness by faith in the historic Christ, nor can He reveal to human reason any truth about Himself worth having, since reason is so corrupted by sin as to be unable to grasp any truth without distorting it.¹ The effect of all this on Christology and on the value of the Gospels for mankind is disastrous. The divine Christ, who is the object of faith, is no longer revealed in and through "Christ after the flesh," so that in Him man may see manifested the character of God and the pattern of human life; the Incarnation becomes the "divine incognito," and the sole and only value of the Gospels is their certification of forgiveness to faith. One almost feels, in reading his book, that Professor Brunner would agree with those who welcome destructive criticism of the historicity of the Gospels, on the ground that it puts an end to our looking for anything in them beyond this one doctrine.²

In all this deduction of the meaning of the Bible from certain *a priori* general truths concerning God and the universe, Professor Brunner fails to recognise the true function of reason, the true nature of philosophy. In other words, he is not a sufficiently whole-hearted champion

¹ Professor Brunner's argument (on pp. 32-3) is to the effect that because our reason is corrupted by sin, it must therefore be prepared to have all its judgments reversed when we see with the eye of faith. The argument reminds one of the similar contention of absolute idealists that we can know nothing for certain until we know everything. I do not think the argument is sound in either case: but in both cases it is a would-be rational deduction from given premisses, and, as such, open to criticism.

² Cp. *op. cit.*, p. 156, note 2. "To me, it seems probable that in 2 Cor. v. 16, the *κατὰ σάρκα* refers to *γινώσκειν* and not to *Χριστόν*. The point is knowledge after the flesh in contrast to spiritual knowledge. Actually, however, it amounts to the same thing in the end. For to knowledge there corresponds its object. That which is accessible to knowledge according to the flesh is precisely the *Χριστός κατὰ σάρκα* and, to spiritual perception, the *Χριστός κατὰ πνεῦμα*." At times Professor Brunner seems to introduce such division into the unity of the incarnate life of Christ as to make his doctrine a kind of modern form of Nestorianism. But my point here is to call attention to such a sentence as "to knowledge there corresponds its object," used as the basis of an argument. This is surely not an intuition of faith received through the biblical revelation.

of the Reformation. He is not content to bear witness to the Christian revelation and to protest against any distortion of it in the philosophic systems of his time; he does not whole-heartedly contend that the revealed activity of the Living God, to which he bears witness, must be reckoned with in any philosophical system that man may devise. Had he realised that the true function of human reason, the true work of philosophy, is a humble quest of understanding, he could have testified saying "Your system will not do. You will have to break it up and try again." Then his heart would have been wholly devoted to his witness as a religious reformer. But his allegiance is divided between witnessing to the religious revelation and maintaining a rationalistic system of abstract thought, which controls his interpretation of it, which is equally liable to distort it, and which has no more claim to be above criticism than those which he attacks. In him we find once again an example of men upon whom reason is revenged for their denial of its competence. They turn out to be rationalists in spite of themselves.

Faith must philosophise. But faith will philosophise better if it does so with its eyes open, knowing what it is doing, and realising that its systematising must be open to criticism and revision as much as anyone else's.

Whether we are dealing with the Lutheran or the Calvinistic tradition, we must distinguish between that in them which bears witness to the Christian revelation, protesting against its distortion in the current philosophical system, and that which insists upon the acceptance of a counter-system not derivable from the revelation itself. When we do this, we find that the positive insistence of the reformers on the necessity of the acceptance by faith of the personal redemptive act of God in Christ as the essence of the Christian religion is their true witness to the revelation, but that their negative polemic against the revelation being taken to involve any further knowledge of God beyond this is of more doubtful authority. We may go further, and say that, from the point of view of philosophy, their most

important contribution is to be found in the assertion that the ultimate nature of reality must be found in the personal activity of God, which personal activity must not be set against a background of some "more ultimate" impersonal reality.¹ The importance of these points for our argument will appear later.² We must now return to our immediate task of trying to state what the Christian revelation is.

Both Brunner and Sasse reject the view that the Bible *is* the revelation.³ The Bible bears witness to the revelation, which is the Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself. "The content of the Biblical revelation is the truth as a person, is Jesus Christ. 'To Him all the prophets give witness, that we are to obtain forgiveness of sins through His name'" (Acts x. 43). That is the content of the Gospel, the content of the Holy Scriptures. From the first to the last page all words point to Him: 'Behold the Lamb of God which bears the sin of the world.' (John i. 29)."⁴

II

Our starting-point, then, by common consent, is Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ as witnessed to by the Bible and accepted by faith as God incarnate. Our Christian creed is not primarily a doctrine about what God eternally is: it is an assertion of what God has done once for all at a definite moment in the history of this world—"under Pontius Pilate." In 1 Cor. xv. 45-48, St. Paul emphasises this distinctive characteristic of Christianity. At the time when he was writing there were current in the surrounding paganism myths concerning an ideal "heavenly man," through whose appearance on earth comes a divine revela-

¹ My criticism of the Lutheran and Calvinistic traditions as they exist may be expressed by saying that I believe their anti-rationalism to spring from infidelity to their own first principles at this point: the personal activity of God is limited by the requirements of impersonal "laws" concerning such subjects as sovereignty, sin and wrath.

² See below, pp. 154 ff.

³ *E.g. The Mediator*, pp. 172, 185; *Faith and Order Pamphlet No. 71*, p. 17.

⁴ H. Sasse in the paper summarised in the pamphlet referred to.

tion. Doubtless there were some who sought to interpret Christianity by identifying Jesus Christ with the archetypal man of these myths. But St. Paul would have none of it. "In our faith," he says in effect, "there is no place for any such conception as the archetypal man. The only men we know anything about are creatures of flesh and blood to whom God has given the breath of life, the sons of Adam. Jesus Christ is not the man from heaven; He is the Lord from heaven who only became man when He was conceived in the womb of His earthly mother and came to share our life in flesh and blood. Our starting-point is the actual, historical, natural, earthly incarnation of the Lord from heaven, who has been crucified and is now risen and ascended, and will take us to share in His risen and ascended life." The same emphasis on the historical basis of the Christian message is found at the beginning of the first Johannine Epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

But it was not simply a message concerning a piece of history dead and gone. It concerned an act of God begun and still continuing in the historical sphere, and still creating fresh history as time went on. This Jesus Christ who had lived, died, risen and ascended had not only brought to mankind forgiveness for their sins, He had gathered together a company of men and women among whom He still lived as their unseen living Lord and Master, binding them to Himself in a unique relationship for which no parallel could be found in human experience elsewhere. The New Testament writers use various different metaphors in trying to describe this. St. Paul speaks of Christians as having received "the adoption of sons," as being "members of the body of Christ," as being "in Christ" and as having Christ in them.¹ In the Johannine writings, Christ is the vine of which Christians are the branches, they are to abide in Him and He in them; they "have" the Son, and having Him have the Father also, and this means that they

¹ Rom. viii. 14, 15; Gal. iv. 5; 1 Cor. xv. 27; 2 Cor. i. 21; Eph. ii. 6, 13; Gal. ii. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 5; Eph. iii. 20; Col. i. 27, etc.

are enjoying a new kind or quality of life called "eternal."¹ These and many other similar passages cannot be understood unless we realise that they are attempts to bear witness to that experience of newness of life which was the privilege of those who were God's "new creation in Christ Jesus,"² united to God, I repeat, in a unique relationship to which no parallel was to be found elsewhere. I emphasise this uniqueness, because it is a point which we shall find later to be of immense significance.

Whence had this new life come to them? The original Christians had been chosen and called to be His followers by Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet of Galilee. They had come to acknowledge His claim to be the Messiah, the fulfilment of the hopes of the Jewish race to which He and they belonged. Their faith in His Messiahship had had its ups and downs, for He was so unlike the expectations they had had of what Messiah should be and do. But it had been restored by His resurrection; and then He had ceased to appear among them, and had left them in a way which suggested that He was now reigning in heaven above—the Son of Man had passed to His glory at the right hand of God, whence He would shortly return to judgment. As they had watched and waited for His coming there had been worked in them a change of which the results are written on the pages of indubitable history more clearly than the circumstances. In the Book of Acts this change is connected with a single event, described as the experience of a rushing mighty wind with a vision of tongues of flame.³ However that may be, the fact remains that those men received an insight into the meaning of Christ's life and work which gave them a gospel to preach, and were possessed of an inward power that drove them out to preach it.

It seems probable that at first they interpreted this change in terms of their faith in Christ as the risen and ascended

¹ John xv. 1-7.

² Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

³ Acts. ii. 1-4. The question whether this passage records a single historical event, or sums up dramatically a change which took place more gradually, is irrelevant to the argument here.

Messiah. Absent from earth and reigning in heaven, He had fulfilled the promise given by God through His prophets and sent down His Spirit upon His disciples. But then there came the realisation that through this possession by the Holy Spirit of God they were united with their risen and ascended Lord, who was no absent Messiah but verily and indeed present with them in their life on earth. The pentecostal coming of the Spirit turned out to be also the second coming of the Lord Jesus.¹ He came in a form as unexpected as at His first coming in the stable at Bethlehem, and again His coming was at first unperceived by those among whom He came. But it was not long before His presence was realised, and with this came the realisation of the nature of that new life to which, as we have seen, the New Testament bears witness.

The essence of it was that in the redeemed community Christ was reproducing that way of life which had been His upon earth. Its members were "adopted" to share in His sonship to the Father in the Spirit, which meant that "in Him" they shared His relationship to the Father and to the Father's world around them, and thus it was that the Church was His "body," the organ through which He continued to live and carry on His work on earth.

What was that work? It was the redemption of the Father's world from the powers of evil to which it lay in subjection. At His first coming He had found various expectations of what Messiah should be and do. Some had looked for an earthly leader who should restore by force of arms the glories of the golden age of Israel's history under David; others had despaired of any future for this world and looked for the appearance of a divine being who should bring this creation to an end in an apocalyptic catastrophe and gather up His elect to reign with Him in a new heaven and a new earth. But Jesus the Christ had rejected both these notions. He had renounced the temptation to win by force dominion

¹ For the New Testament teaching about the relation between the Holy Spirit and Christ in the Christian life, see L. S. Thornton, *The Incarnate Lord* (London, 1928), chapters xi, xii.

over "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them"; and He had also refused to regard the Father's world as hopelessly and irredeemably corrupted by the sin which had such power over it. Although so infected by sin, it was still the Father's world, and it could be redeemed from the power of that infection by the method of the cross.¹

From the first He had taken His stand upon the revelation of God given through the prophets of the old covenant. His first public act had been to associate Himself with the movement for which John the Baptist stood, with that preaching of an uncompromising demand for righteousness in which the old prophetic note was struck anew. His public ministry throughout had been consistent with this beginning. Although He had known Himself to be the apocalyptic "Son of Man," coming into the history of this world from outside in order to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, the character of the Kingdom which He had come to inaugurate was to fulfil the expectations of the prophets rather than of the apocalyptists. There was indeed no doubt of the divine omnipotence, or of the certainty of its triumph over the powers of evil, but it would not be by the demonstration of His omnipotence that God omnipotent would be delighted. It would be by the universal reign of righteousness and love.² Thus the Kingdom of God was not a kingdom which could be established among men by application of external force. Whilst stones, trees, mountains and storms could be ordered about, men and women had to be waited upon and won by an appeal which should call out their free response. Later on St. Paul summed up the method of Christ's approach to men and women when he wrote, "The love of Christ constraineth us."³

So He had preached a gospel of repentance; for, since the Kingdom was to be the Kingdom of righteousness and love, only by repentance and forgiveness could men be brought within it. And as in one short lifetime He could only hope

¹ On the meaning of this phrase, see my *And was made Man* (London, 1928), chapter v, and *The Lord's Prayer* (London, 1934), Sermons II and IV.

² Cp. *And Was Made Man*, pp. 67 ff.

³ 2 Cor. v. 14.

to reach a very limited circle, He had chosen and called those through whom His work should be carried on throughout the world.¹ But, before they could be sent forth on their mission, there was a task to be performed which only He Himself could perform: the "Son of Man," the supernatural Messiah who had become incarnate and broken into the course of history from the side of God, must give Himself to death on the cross to redeem the Father's world from the powers of evil. Only through death could He pass to victory, and only through *His* death could forgiveness be made available for mankind and His forgiven followers be taken up to share in the victory and so be united to Himself in the Spirit and carry on His work as His body on earth.

Here, in barest outline, we have the divine revelation in Christ, the Word of God, in the perspective in which it appeared to those who knew themselves to be God's "new creatures" "in Christ." They who were living the new life as members of His body knew that it was not a life of their own finding or devising. It was no natural fruition of an evolutionary development in creation. It sprang from their Lord as its source, and He had entered history from without; He had actually and historically lived, died, risen, ascended and united them to Himself in the Spirit; it was the life which He Himself had lived and which He was now reproducing in them. They were His new creation.

III

We take, then, this New Testament witness to the life and work of Christ as the core of the Christian revelation.

¹ Cp. Mark iii. 14, 15; Matt. x. 40, xxvii. 18-20; John xv. 15, 16, xvii. 18, xx. 21. Even if these passages in Matthew and John do not record *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, they are evidence for the interpretation of His life and work which was given to the Church through the pentecostal gift of the Spirit. My whole point in this section of this chapter is that the New Testament, when considered as the medium of divine revelation, bears witness primarily to Jesus Christ as seen by the Church under the guidance of the Spirit.

In doing so, and in making this our starting-point, we declare our own adherence to those cardinal truths for which the reformers stood. Jesus Christ was, in the fullest sense of the words, God incarnate : no mere accidental illustration of truths about God, but God Himself personally active, who had broken into the course of history from without and was now shaping it from within. And what He had come to do in the first instance was the act of atonement, through which He should bring to men forgiveness for sin and redemption from its power. We have now to ask what light this throws upon the Old Testament as equally with the New a book of inspired witness to the Word of God.

We have seen that in His concentration of attention upon sin as the fundamental obstacle to the establishment of the Kingdom of God our Lord set His seal upon the work of the Old Testament prophets. The chief work of those prophets had been to teach that obedience to conscience was man's primary act of faith in God. In earlier days God might have been thought of as a mysterious power—as a power so mysterious that no one could tell what He would do next, and anything might be His will, no matter how absurd, cruel, unjust, or irrational. It could only be discovered by such means as casting lots, observing omens, interpreting dreams, or persuading wizards to peep and mutter. Cutting right across all this came the prophetic message requiring justice, mercy and truthfulness of those who would be God's servants. Henceforward the essence of faith in God was to be for a man to do what he honestly believed to be right, and trust the power behind the universe to back him up. His notions of what is right and what wrong might be inadequate or false, but fidelity to the light already given him was the condition of his receiving fuller illumination. By the proclamation of this message the prophets lifted the religion of the people of Israel out of the whole mass of natural religions, and laid the foundation of its claim to become the one universal religion for all mankind. For through the prophets God proclaimed Himself to be

that self-authenticating goodness which is the goal of all human thought and aspiration.¹

But conscience, which is man's exercise of his reason in matters of moral judgment, cannot be divorced from his reasoning in matters of truth and falsehood. Nor do the prophets do so. In God's name they reason with their hearers, appealing to their capacity to recognise truth when it is put before them.² It follows that faith in human reason is not necessarily a mark of impious pride; it is a corollary of faith in God, if we believe in the God of the biblical revelation. Nor, if we accept this revelation, can we regard this reason as so corrupted by sin as to be wholly unreliable, for God is revealed to us as appealing to it in order to produce in man that conviction of sin which shall bring man to repentance and acceptance of the forgiveness which Christ was to bring. According to the Bible the divine redemptive activity begins with God's endorsement of natural theology.

At the risk of seeming tedious it must be repeated that this acknowledgment of the value of human reason does not minimise the seriousness of its corruption by sin, assert its adequacy to achieve its own perfection, or deny the truth that man's only hope lies in the activity of God breaking into his life from outside and doing for him what he cannot do for himself. But it asserts that, according to the record of this activity which forms the Christian revelation, God's method has been to rescue from its corruption whatever there was in man of good, and to do this by stimulating that good in man to respond to His activity. The assertion that because of the prevalence of sin there can have been no such goodness in him is a deduction from a metaphysic

¹ This point was clearly seen by Aubrey Moore in his essay on "The Christian Doctrine of God" in *Lux Mundi* (ed. Gore; London, 1889). See also my *Democracy and Dictatorship in the Light of Christian Faith* (Oxford, 1935), and a paper on "Sins and Imperfections," published in the *Canadian Journal of Religious Thought* for January-February 1931. And above, Chapter I, p. 15 n.

² E.g. Amos ii. 1-8, ix. 7; Isa. xl. 12-28, xlv. 9-20. On the point that man's capacity to recognise truth is the essential function of his reason, see Chapter II above.

which is in contradiction with the Word of God. What I have done is to take the evangelical principle that the Bible, as witnessing to the Word of God, puts in the centre the personal redeeming work of Christ in history; I have tried to emphasise that principle by disentangling it from notions originating elsewhere and often in the past too readily assumed to be consistent with it.

Fidelity to this principle has led us to read the prophetic witness in the light of its fulfilment in Christ, and from the same standpoint—the standpoint of the New Testament—we may now look further back beyond the prophets to the earlier books of the Bible.

There is a passage in Professor C. C. J. Webb's Gifford Lectures on "God and Personality"¹ in which he writes:

"What relation . . . did the myths of Plato bear to his philosophy? . . . I think that with him the myth is not concerned, strictly speaking, with the same subject matter as Philosophy, but rather takes the place of History, where a historical question is asked, but the materials for an historical answer are lacking.

"How did the world come into being? How did society begin? What will happen to our souls after death? It is to such questions as these that Plato offers replies in the form of myths. Philosophy cannot answer such questions, any more than it can tell me where I dined this day last year or where I shall dine this day next year. For an answer to the former of these two enquiries I should consult my personal memory or my journal; and if I wished for information about something that happened before I was born, I should seek for it in the history-books. But if what I want to know must have happened at a time whereof there is no record extant, what can I do? The best I can do, says Plato, is to frame a myth, a story which, if not the truth, will at any rate be like the truth. But this cannot merely mean that it is to be like what actually occurred, for *ex hypothesi* I do not know what did occur, and hence cannot tell what would be like it and what not.

"What it means for Plato, however, is not doubtful. It means that the myth is to be in accord with those conclusions as to the general nature of things which I derive not from History but from Philosophy. Just as you could not tell me where and on what I dined this day last year, but could confidently assert that it was not in fairyland and not on nectar and ambrosia, so too we are sure that whatever took place in the unrecorded past must have been consistent with what we know to be the eternal nature of Reality; whatever we have reason to think is incompatible

¹ London, 1918, pp. 168-9.

with that eternal nature of Reality we have reason to think did not occur in the past and will not occur in the future.”

In this lecture our criterion is not the eternal nature of reality as conceived by philosophy: it is the activity of God as revealed in Christ. This being grasped, it is clear that, *mutatis mutandis*, Professor Webb's principle gives us our key to the reading of the Old Testament. Unconsciously indeed, this principle was followed by the writers of the Old Testament throughout the process of its compilation. At every one of the revisions through which the various books have passed before they reached their canonical form, the mass of folk-lore, legend, and historical material which they contained was purged of what was inconsistent with what men were coming to know of God under prophetic guidance. Doubtless this process has often diminished their value as evidence for the reconstruction of earthly history; but it is what gives them their unity and their value as witnessing to the Word of God. It is not as a record of human deeds and discoveries, it is not as a history of one of the many religions of mankind, that the Bible holds its place in the Christian Church. It is because those who read the Old Testament in the light of the New see therein the earlier chapters of the record of that divine redemptive activity which culminated in the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection and Pentecost. That the world was God's creation, and, as God's creation, good; that it was corrupted by sin and in bondage to powers of evil; that God had set Himself to redeem it and for this purpose had chosen the children of Israel and trained them for use in His redemptive work; and that all this was preparing the ground for the conclusive action to be taken in Christ—this is the witness of the Old Testament to the Word of God. “Once for all in Jesus Christ God is revealed to us as the Redeemer and Perfecter of His fallen world. This revelation casts its light over all the rest of history, over that which went before, which has followed since, and which is yet to come. Of the origin of evil neither the Bible, nor any other historical evidence available, tells us anything. When our

knowledge of the world begins, we are dealing with a race in bondage to ignorance, suffering and sin. The Bible proclaims that so far back as our records enable us to go, we find God at work on the side of man, rescuing him from ignorance, suffering and sin.”¹

The Bible does not bear witness to a God whose coming in Christ confounds human reason or ends human history. It bears witness to Christ, the Word of God, who confounds and destroys the philosophical presuppositions from which such doctrines spring. Had He not come as He did we might possibly have expected His coming to have this effect. But now we can do so no longer.

IV

At the end of Chapter III we left philosophy face to face with three open questions: whether the universe has any meaning as a whole; what is the nature of the subject-matter of scientific inquiry; and what is the status of man. It is now clear that Christian faith comes forward, follows its own true method of asserting instead of inquiring and proving, and gives an answer to each and all of these three questions.

Beginning with the last of them, it asserts that man is made for communion with God. It asserts this, not by way of putting forward a speculative theory, but by witnessing to a matter of historical fact. “We who speak,” say the Christians, “speak as men who for no merit of our own have been rescued from subjection to the powers of evil, have been cleansed from our own sins, and are members of our Saviour’s body on earth, sharing His life in the Spirit, seeking to find and do the Father’s work in the Father’s world until He shall call us to a life of even richer and fuller communion with Himself beyond the grave.”

Then, taking up the first of the three questions, faith asserts that of course there is a central meaning in the universe as a whole. It is God’s creation, the creation of the

¹ *Democracy and Dictatorship, etc.*, p. 22.

God whose life we share in Christ. It is the scene within which, and the material out of which, He is forming a kingdom of free human spirits bound together in Christ by laws of righteousness and love. And as for scientific inquiry, its function is to study the nature and habits of that universe which God has created to be the raw material out of which He is forming His kingdom.

I will now close this chapter by making three observations on these assertions of Christian faith.

(1) In making them, faith gives their charter to the sciences and philosophy and encourages them to further pursuit of their own tasks by their own methods. It does not say that God's self-revelation in Christ shows human reason to be worthless, and scientific and philosophic studies to be trivial pastimes for men on earth, all destined to be consumed in the everlasting bonfire and of no importance compared with the things of God and eternity. On the contrary, it asserts that the universe, as the creation of God the "Faithful and True," has that orderliness and meaning which He has given it for His purpose, which make it an object worth studying and prepared to yield its secrets to patient inquiry. In so far as it is unintelligible, it is because of its infection with evil; but God in Christ has entered into its history to rescue it from that evil, and bit by bit, through those who form His body on earth, is rendering intelligible whatever as it stands is not so. In so far as scientific and philosophic inquiry increase man's power to control the forces of nature in accordance with God's will, they are themselves used by Him for the furtherance of His central purpose in creation which gives its meaning to the whole.

This view must be carefully distinguished from those according to which faith dictates their results to the sciences and philosophy, and leaves to them only the pastime of finding proofs for foregone conclusions. From the point of view of philosophy the content of the faith is a hypothesis needing verification; from the point of view of the man of faith it is a matter of empirical fact which he insists shall not be explained away, and which he regards as of supreme

significance for the interpretation of everything else. "Our primary task as Christians," he would say, "is to bear witness to our life of communion with God which is ours as a gift from our Saviour. From within this life we look out on the universe; it is full of unsolved problems—scientific problems concerning the habits of its parts and philosophical problems concerning their meaning. The scientific problems must be studied by the methods and canons of the science, the philosophical by those of philosophy. We do not know what the results will be, but we believe that in viewing them from the standpoint of our faith we have found the one way of approach to them which holds out hope of their ultimate solution."

Among problems of this type must surely be included such questions as those of the extent of the corruption introduced into creation by sin, and whether God's purpose in creation was to provide an object for His redeeming activity. On these questions Christians have been and are divided.¹ In my view Professor Brunner and those who hold with him err in regarding it as the function of faith to prescribe the answers to such questions. What we know by faith is that we are redeemed by Christ, and by Him brought into communion with God; this and nothing more. The rest can only become part of the content of faith as a deduction from its primary deliverance, and the making of such deductions is a function of human reason in which there is room for differences of opinion between Christians who share in the faith itself. It is not justifiable for those who hold one view to denounce those who hold another as being deficient in that faith which makes them all fellow-Christians.

We stand between two fires. On the one hand are those who are so jealous for the rights of scientific and philosophical inquiry that they will allow no place for the witness of faith. On the other are those who so exalt the function of faith as

¹ A Lutheran friend once made clear to me that in his view the work of Christ was not to restore a world which had fallen away from God's original purpose for it, but that the world had been created in order to be redeemed.

to leave no room for the working of reason. But the truly Christian position both claims a hearing for the witness of faith, and thanks God for the gift of reason whereby we may learn to understand the nature and the meaning of His creation.

(2) One of the chief obstacles to right thinking on these subjects is the lingering influence of what I have elsewhere called the "ark-theory" of the Church, which itself rests upon an undue preoccupation with soteriology as the be-all and end-all of religion.¹ A few minutes ago I was speaking at some length of the New Testament witness to the "new life" in Christ, which is the core of the Christian revelation. Some people, recognising this to be the plain teaching of the New Testament, conclude that those who have thus been chosen and called by God in Christ are more favourably situated with a view to eternal bliss than the rest of mankind. "Were this not so," they are inclined to ask, "what advantage hath the Christian?" Others, who have thoroughly assimilated the prophetic teaching that what God looks for in a man is fidelity to the light he has received, are so revolted by this conclusion that they cannot believe that the New Testament really says what it does; they explain away the doctrine of the Incarnation, making of it no more than the natural perfection of human development.

These two views, which are often urged in violent antagonism to each other, spring from a common root. They assume that the purpose of God in calling His chosen people is to distinguish those who are to be saved from those who are not. But this is an assumption which has its origin elsewhere than in the revelation of the Word of God. The Christ of the Gospels regarded His earthly vocation as vocation to a kingship of service, to give His life on behalf of mankind. It is that vocation which He wills to share with those who are chosen and called to share by adoption in His sonship of the Father. What advantage, then, hath the Christian? Not the selfish enjoyment of feeling superior to the rest of mankind, but the unselfish joy of giving his

¹ See my *And Was Made Man*, p. 104.

life in communion with his Master on behalf of all mankind who, equally with himself, are objects of God's love and will to save.

There is perhaps no more striking evidence of the depth of the corruption wrought by sin in human nature than the fact that we find it so difficult to receive the divine revelation at this point. "God is love," and therefore the divine life is a life of utter self-giving, so perfect and complete as never to ask whether anything is received in return for what is given. In Christ God offers to us men membership in a society which is to be His body on earth, in which the life of Christ is to be reproduced in and through us. But the habit of valuing whatever is offered to us by asking what we shall get out of it is so deeply ingrained in us that we are almost incapable of realising what this means. Quite honestly we think that we are rightly apprehending God's offer of the new life in Christ, when we are misapprehending it as an offer of a superior chance of salvation. So deeply ingrained is this selfish outlook in the common consciousness of mankind, that the nearly two thousand years during which the spirit of Christ has been striving with us have not been enough for it to be cast out of the mind of the Church. When it is gone, the greatest obstacle to accepting the New Testament witness to the distinctive uniqueness of the new life in Christ will be found to have disappeared with it.¹

¹ I should like to suggest the hypothesis that the positive value of the doctrine of Predestination as developed in the Reformed tradition is the witness it bears to this truth. In itself it is not part of the content of the Christian revelation, but a logical deduction from the abstract notion of omnipotence, and it has been developed in such a way as to become an outstanding instance of the way in which the revelation can be distorted by metaphysical doctrines applied to it under the influence of soteriology. It is, in fact, an outstanding instance of error due to the corruption of human reason by sin. But its practical effect has often been to free those who hold it from concern with their own salvation, and thus to lead them to devote themselves more whole-heartedly to the service of God. Thus, in an age when preoccupation with soteriology was taken for granted by all schools of thought, it found a way of producing a type of Christian life which bore genuine witness to the Christian revelation.

It may be objected that there are many passages in the New Testament which seem to show that its authors held the ark-theory, and none which

(3) Lastly, I would emphasise and draw out some implications of two points already mentioned: the personal character of the Christian revelation and the uniqueness of the new life in Christ to which the Bible bears witness. In an earlier chapter I pointed out the fascination exercised over our minds by impersonal "laws of nature" owing to the fact that they exhibit an orderliness which appears superior to that characteristic of human personal life. We saw, by way of example, how easily we slip into regarding the personal life of a human individual as the transient expression of a more real impersonal system of "inhibitions" and "complexes."¹ The effect of this fascination is that it leads us to apply a similar mode of thinking to God's self-revelation, and to regard the divine personal activity in creation and redemption as appearances of some more real impersonal goodness or reality. Against surrender to this fascination Christian faith must protest with every ounce of its strength. It is because philosophy has so often made this surrender that it is traditionally suspect by faith. But need it do so? May it not be the privilege of faith to rescue philosophy from this irrational fascination and set its feet in the way which leads more directly towards its own goal?

We have seen that philosophy is the attempt to exhibit the rational coherence of all that exists in the light of some central principle which gives its meaning to the whole and to all its parts. Clearly this central principle must be something objectively given to and grasped by the philosopher's mind. Christian faith declares that the ultimate reality, that which alone will be found to be logically self-consistent and self-authenticating in its goodness, is the conscious,

unequivocally deny it. This may be so, but it does not affect the fact that it is inconsistent with the revelation of God in Christ to which the New Testament (indeed the Bible) as a whole bears witness; it is parallel to the denial of any second opportunity of repentance in Heb. vi. 4-8, xii. 14-17. See above, p. 15, note 1.

¹ See above, p. 23, and below, p. 165.

active, purposive, personal life of God.¹ This is revealed to us through that activity of God in history whereby we are taken up by adoption to share in the sonship of Christ, and so to know that life from the inside.

If this be so, then the most real thing of which we have any experience is our relationship to God in Christ. It is not surprising that we should be unable to "explain" this relationship in terms of any other relationship experienced or observed upon earth. On the contrary, it contains within itself the explanation of everything else. We have seen that its uniqueness is witnessed to by the variety and apparent contradictoriness of the language used to describe it in the New Testament. This may confuse and baffle the reader who has no personal experience of the reality it describes; but the Christian reader knows what it means, and how each different metaphor attempts to express some different element in the many-sided richness of the Christian life. Nor does this mean that the divine personal life, which is the ultimate reality, is to be regarded as something irrational or illogical, such that we may seek to grasp it by neglect of either reason or logic. It is the one reality which is perfect in its logical self-consistency and self-authenticating in its goodness, and the will of God, revealed to us as we enter into personal relations with Him, is the source of all the reason and logic in creation, so that in the fuller understanding of His will we find the fulfilment, not the negation, of all that is reasonable and logical in the universe.

So Christian faith protests against that idea of philosophy which dismisses the description of our relationship to God in personal, dramatic terms as "mere mythology," to be

¹ In speaking of the "personal life of God" I do not mean to assert that God is a person, but that the inner life of the Blessed Trinity is a life of personal relationships which are not to be regarded as rooted in or derived from some more real impersonal deity. With Professor Webb I should speak of personality *in* God rather than personality *of* God. See his *God and Personality* (London, 1918), *passim*. Further discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity would here be out of place, but this much must be said to prevent misunderstanding.

transcended in some “more philosophical” statement in abstract and impersonal terms. Faith must philosophise. It must philosophise in the light of the revelation it has received. And the core of its philosophy is the conviction that the impersonal is to be understood by reference to the personal, and not *vice versa*.

CHAPTER IX

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

I

OUR starting-point to-day is the Christian revelation, the testimony of those who are conscious of having been chosen, called, cleansed, and received into personal communion with Himself by God through Christ. We are to take our stand among the company of the faithful, from this standpoint to consider and philosophise about the universe, trying to follow with our eyes the rays which stream from the revelation that has been given to us and is the luminous centre of all our thinking.

Quite clearly four things can be stated at once as involved in this revelation:

(1) Man is made for communion with God. That we should "lay hold on eternal life" is the purpose of our existence, and it is this divine purpose which gives meaning to everything that concerns us. Moreover, this "eternal life," as it has been revealed to us, is a life of fellowship with one another through our common relationship to God in Christ. God is gathering us into the brotherhood of His family, uniting us to Himself and to one another by adopting us to share in the sonship of Jesus Christ.

From this two things follow. First, since this life for which we are made is a life of personal fellowship, we who are to enter into it must be persons capable of doing so. We must be free beings, such that all our activities in communion with God and with one another are the expression of our own personal wills. Secondly, since our empirical study of the actual universe shows that in the order of time we men and women come into existence as members of the physical world, as, so to speak, organic cells of the whole physical universe distinguished by being each the seat of a centre of self-conscious, purposive life, therefore this whole physical universe finds its meaning as providing the materials

and the conditions for the creation of this brotherhood of mankind in the family of God.

(2) The new life of communion with God in Christ is derived from the activity of God Himself. It is received by us as a free gift from God; we cannot claim in any way to have devised or achieved it for ourselves. We are utterly dependent upon God as Creator for our existence, and upon God as Saviour for the forgiveness whereby we are reborn into the new life.

This has two consequences of importance.

As members of the physical universe we are insignificant and short-lived specks on one of the minor planets in space. What right have we to claim that this vast universe exists to provide the materials and conditions for the personal life of our insignificant and short-lived selves? If we were to claim any such right in virtue of our own achievements, the student of astrophysics might quite properly laugh us to scorn; but we cut away the ground from under his ridicule by pointing out that faith forbade us to make any such pretensions long before science thought of doing so. We only believe that the perfecting of human personal life is the divine purpose in which we are to find the meaning of the universe because God has revealed Himself to us as active in working for this perfection. We should be fools to make this claim in any other spirit than that of utter humility, accepting as God's gift a status in the universe which reveals more clearly than anything else our complete dependence upon Him.

But just because in accepting His revelation we acknowledge our dependence upon Him, we are bound also to assert the complete dependence upon Him of the whole space-time universe. For, as we have seen, we come into existence as organic cells of that universe, and we cannot but believe that the same God who has been active in choosing, calling, cleansng and adopting us has also been active in all the age-long evolutionary process of creation whereby we have been brought into existence.

(3) The activity of God in Christ, from which as a

matter of historical fact the new life has been derived, has been a redeeming as well as a creating activity. We cannot regard the history of the universe as a straightforward story of the moulding of a society of human souls for communion with God. Our Christian philosophy must recognise the existence of evil and try to give some account of its having played and still playing the part it does. The activity through which God has revealed Himself to us shows Him, from as far back as we can trace, as antagonistic to evil, and as overcoming it and casting it out of His creation. We shall have to ask what light is thrown on the philosophical problem of evil when we view it from the standpoint of those who know within themselves something of the fruits of the divine victory over evil.

(4) The standpoint from which we view the universe is that of men sharing in a way of life now being lived as a matter of historical fact in this actual world. We have been gathered into it by God, who has revealed Himself in a sequence of historical acts recorded in the books of the Bible and the history of the Christian Church. This sequence of events, the history of our own spiritual ancestry, through which God's revelation has come to us, must always have for us a special and unique significance. Our Christian philosophy must therefore recognise this special significance, and find a reasonable way of relating this particular historical sequence to the rest of the events which go to make up the universe.

For the sake of clearness I have begun by stating these four points briefly and baldly, leaving any necessary qualifications to emerge as we consider in more detail the problems that lie before us.

II

The first of these problems is the problem of creation.

We have seen that philosophy is essentially an attempt to understand and discover the meaning of the universe, and that the immediate object of our study is the spatio-temporal process. We are members of a world in which time is ever flying and change succeeds to change. What

does it all mean? Are things getting better or worse? And have we any standards whereby to judge?

Suppose, first, that we regard the whole of reality to consist of this process of universal change. There is nothing beyond the flux of events which makes up the history of this physical universe. Now if this be so, then there is ultimately no meaning in anything. We cannot say that the universe, or this world, or any of the things in this world are getting either better or worse, for our only possible standards are our own observations, likes and dislikes, and we ourselves are but passing incidents in the all-embracing process of change. Suppose, then, that in order to resolve this difficulty we follow the great tradition in philosophy, and posit the existence of an eternal perfection, perfect both in logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness, by reference to which we can judge the trend of events in space and time. Then we are faced by the question: What point is there in the existence of this spatio-temporal universe at all? If it contributes to the enrichment of the eternal and ultimate reality, we are back where we were before, confronted by an ultimate reality itself in process of change and unintelligible; if it does not, then it appears to be, in the most literal sense of the words, "a waste of time." Whichever way we turn, we are baffled, and the conclusion of our thought seems to be the discovery that the universe is a pointless and unmeaning process of change.

All down the ages philosophical thought has been wrestling with this fundamental problem, which still remains unsolved. Those in whose minds the reality of the eternal perfection holds first place are apt to explain away the spatio-temporal universe as being an illusion, or appearance, or in some way or other unreal. This provokes a reaction, and counter-emphasis on the reality of our actual experience as the original object of our thought, which it is our duty to interpret and not to explain away:¹ and then the

¹ Compare the last words of Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: "So the President of the immortals had finished his sport with Tess," with William James's remark: "Well, it doesn't feel like a game."

tendency is to ignore the eternal perfection or even to deny it altogether.

How does this problem appear when it is looked at from the standpoint of Christian faith, in the light of the rays that shine from the Christian revelation?

The first thing to be noticed is that Christianity does not claim to have solved the problem; it does claim, however, that in its doctrine of creation it recognises it for what it is, and refuses to be content with any one-sided evasion of it. To those who would minimise the reality of this universe, who would use such words as "appearance" or "emanation" to describe its relation to its eternal source and ground. Christianity opposes the word "creation," with its emphasis on the relative independence which belongs to a created work over against its creator; to those who would regard this independence as an absolute and not a derived independence, it opposes the phrase "*creation out of nothing*," with its emphasis on the complete sufficiency of the Creator to Himself for His own perfection. To those who would accuse the Christian doctrine of creation of containing within itself an unresolved antinomy the man of faith will reply in the first instance that he knows this perfectly well, but that the antinomy is that provided by the nature of the universe which we are striving to understand, and at our present stage of knowledge is shared by all philosophies which do not ignore one or other side of the problem it presents. Some simpler and easier creed might be sufficient for dwellers in some simpler and more easily intelligible universe; it would have to be rejected as inadequate by any religious man who has thought at all deeply about this actual universe in which we live.

But Christianity does not simply leave this antinomy where it found it. The doctrine of creation has implications which tend to show that it is not so unreasonable as at first sight it appears to be.

By the use of the words "God" and "creation" emphasis is laid on that *personal* character of the eternal perfection to which attention was called at the end of the last chapter.

This means that the logical categories in terms of which the relation of the time-space universe to its eternal source and ground is to be conceived are those drawn from the nature of conscious purposive action and not from that of any impersonal mode of being. We cease to seek for some metaphysical formula whereby we may exhibit the necessity of God and the universe to each other in order that each may be as they are; we ask instead whether it is conceivable that God, being in all His perfection as He eternally is, should have thought it worth while to call into existence such a universe as this one to which we belong.¹ We do not pretend to be able to plumb the depths of the divine will, or to understand all its mysteries, but nevertheless some light does break upon the problem from the revelation of His gracious will which He has given to us ourselves. We know ourselves to have been called into existence in order that we may respond with mutual love to the love of our Creator, and we can dimly apprehend that the creation of beings to whom should be given so glorious a destiny might well be the act of One who in all His eternal perfection is the perfection of active personal love.

We must here digress for a moment to consider the attempt made by some modern Christian thinkers to present the doctrine of the Trinity as containing within it the solution of the philosophical problem of creation. This is usually done by the use of the conception of the Logos, which is held to provide the metaphysical formula necessary to relate the eternal transcendent being of God to His temporal immanence in creation.² I am convinced that all such attempts are mistaken. Undoubtedly the conception of the Logos arose in Hellenistic thought as an attempt to find a metaphysical solution of this problem, and the identification of Jesus Christ with the Logos so conceived was one of the first steps taken by Christian faith in its philoso-

¹ On this see the essays by F. H. Brabant and myself in Rawlinson, *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (London, 1928).

² E.g. W. Temple, *Nature, Man and God* (London, 1934), Lectures XVII and XIX.

phising. But, as Harnack has pointed out,¹ the Logos could only appear to have fulfilled its function of solving this problem so long as it was allowed to hold an equivocal and self-contradictory position, straddling as it were the gulf between Creator and created, and Christian faith in the godhead of our Lord made it impossible for Christians to continue thus to think of the Logos Christ. The Council of Nicaea marked the end of this equivocation in genuine Christian thought. Its assertion of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father in the being of the Godhead committed the Church to a doctrine of direct creation, in which the Trinity as a whole, Son as well as Father, is to be thought of as on the side of the Creator. Hence what is needed is a new attack upon the problem from the standpoint of a post-Nicene Christian philosophy which is fully conscious of its own deliverances and not a revival of pre-Nicene Logos-theology.

For all such revivals seem to me in the end to involve an unjustifiable minimising of the independence of the created universe which we have seen to be one of the cardinal points on which the problem turns. Their last word on the nature of the universe is that "the Eternal fulfils itself in its historical self-expression, so that if this were abolished it would in its own nature be other than it is."² But our starting-point is our status as sinners reconciled to God by His grace and adopted by Him into the life of personal communion with Him and with one another. We are not trying to philosophise about the Christian life from some standpoint external to it, but to philosophise about the universe on the basis of our knowledge of the Christian life as known from within. However difficult may be the problem of the relation of the "I" to the "yet not I but

¹ *History of Dogma* (London, 1894), vol. i, p. 110.

² W. Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 480. Cp. the passage on p. 495: "So God, who is spirit, is His eternal self in and through the historical process of creating a world and winning it to union with Himself. His creation is sacramental of Himself to His creatures; but in effectively fulfilling that function it becomes sacramental of Him to Himself—the means whereby He is eternally that which eternally He is."

Christ who dwelleth in me," there can be no doubt that the distinction between the "I" and the "Christ," and the relative independence, real though derived, of the former is essential to our Christian life being what it is. We are still more certain of this relative independence when we think of our status as reconciled *sinner*s. However much we may say of our good deeds, "Not I, but Christ," of our sins we say "*mea culpa*." The most real thing I know is my life of personal communion with God, and one of the indissoluble elements of reality in this is myself, the reconciled sinner. But if all creation, including myself, be God fulfilling Himself in His historical self-expression, then I, even the sinful I when engaged in sinning, am in the last analysis a mode of God's self-expression.

In the last chapter I criticised certain elements in Lutheran theology on the ground that they subordinated the witness of the Christian revelation to the demands of certain uncriticised philosophical presuppositions, notably those concerning omnipotence and sovereignty. I cannot resist the conclusion that in their exposition of the relation of God to creation the Archbishop of Canterbury and those who think with him have similarly subordinated the witness of the Christian revelation to the demands of absolute idealism. In the earlier part of his book, the Archbishop shows himself to have gone a long way towards emancipating himself from this influence; but in the later lectures it reasserts itself.

What is the ground of the influence exercised by this type of philosophy over so many minds? It is surely due to the fact that this type alone seems to meet the demand for a reality which shall be shown to be logically self-consistent and self-authenticating in goodness. We have seen that to make this demand is essential to the nature of philosophy, but that another demand equally essential is the demand that our conception of reality shall be able to interpret and not to distort or dissolve away the actual facts of our experienced universe. Between these two demands there is perpetual tension. Those thinkers whom we are

now considering have grasped the necessity of both demands, and are striving to show that the actual nature of human life and experience is such as to be consistent with that type of philosophy which most fully satisfies the former, and that this type of philosophy can be revised so as to assimilate the deeper insight into the nature of actual existence which developing scientific study has given us. It is an attempt well worth making, and the particular attempt made by Dr. Temple in his Gifford Lectures can be described as nothing less than a magnificent effort. Few thinkers of that school of thought have gone further in recognition of the reality of contingency, of personal freedom, and of evil as real factors in our present experience. Nevertheless, these factors turn out in the end to be phases in the self-realisation of the one eternal Being, and this conclusion I believe to be inconsistent with the witness of the Christian faith.

It will probably be urged that the refusal to accept these conclusions argues a lack of philosophical seriousness, a contentment with "naïve mythology" which is the mark of a non-philosophical mind. This contention I wish to challenge with all the force at my disposal. Philosophy demands full acknowledgment of the actual as well as the search for logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness, and if there are elements in the actual which are indigestible by any known philosophical scheme, then to assert this fact and to remain for the time being in a state of philosophical dissatisfaction is a truly philosophical position.¹

¹ I believe the repudiation of all philosophy by certain theologians to be largely due to non-recognition of the truth for which I am here contending. In their writings it seems to be taken for granted that "philosophy" means the exposition of certain logically self-consistent schemes of thought which are inconsistent with the Christian revelation: in other words, philosophy is identified with particular philosophical systems already existent. But when it is recognised that the essential nature of philosophy is a quest in the course of which the particular systems are successive inadequate attempts at a final solution of the problems, the case is altered. Christian faith is then able to act not only as a critic of existing systems, but also as providing material and inspiration for further attempts, as the ally and not the enemy of philosophy.

Faith must philosophise. It must accept the criteria of logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness as guiding stars. But faith will insist that the God to whom those stars would lead us will best be found if we start from the revelation He has already given us.

What this will involve in difference of method can be seen by a single example. Readers of "Nature, Man and God" will remember that in seeking for an analogy whereby to exhibit the relation of God transcendent over His creation to God immanent in it the Archbishop of Canterbury makes use of the relation between a man's purposive mind and his bodily life as a whole.¹ This relationship of mind to process within creation is taken as analogous to that between the eternal Mind, which is God, and the whole process which is creation. But if I have been right in my account of what constitutes the Christian revelation, we have a more direct method of approach. Our starting-point is the relationship between God and ourselves as the objects of His redeeming activity in Christ. The witness of faith is that God is actively engaged in constituting us as persons to share personally in that divine life of love which is the eternal life of the Blessed Trinity. This relationship cannot possibly be illustrated by any relationship within creation which does not allow for personal life on both sides. If any analogy were to be found for it within creation, it would have to be sought for in the social relations between human persons rather than in the relation between the personal and impersonal elements in a man's being. But here again no full analogy can be found. To admit this is only another way of recognising that uniqueness of man's relationship to God in Christ which we found in the last chapter to be characteristic of it according to the New Testament witness.²

¹ *Op. cit.*, Lecture XI. Dr. Temple rejects the analogy of mind to body on the ground that it involves "quite special and ruinous difficulties when we consider the relation of the Divine Mind to our own" (p. 283). The analogy he uses is that of the immanence of a person "in his conduct as it occurs" (p. 285), which I have paraphrased as "his bodily life as a whole."

² The required analogy would have to combine the personal distinctness

In our ordinary experience a "personal" relationship can be either mutual or one-sided. It is mutual when two persons are in communion with one another; it is one-sided in such an activity as that of a potter moulding his clay. In a mutual personal relationship there is conscious purposive activity on both sides; in a one-sided personal relationship there is conscious purposive activity on the one side and unconscious passivity on the other. The existence of this class of one-sided personal relationships, as a middle term between the mutually personal and the mutually impersonal, might seem to be too obvious to be worth mentioning it were it not for the fact that much confusion in theology is apparently due to its having been overlooked. The importance of recognising it will appear more than once in the later stages of our argument.

We have seen that, according to the witness of faith, the aim of our existence is a mutual personal relationship between man and God in which the note of personal distinctness between God and man is never lost. The Christian hope of a future life is wholly different from any expectation of absorption into a oneness with God such as is characteristic of Neoplatonism and certain Oriental religions. This difference in our expectation is connected with a difference in our view of our origin. In the last chapter we saw that, so far as the order of time is concerned, we men and women of social relationships with the closeness of union of the mind to bodily process relationship. Cp. Tennyson's lines:

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

The derivative quality of created life might be suggested by the relationship of father to son; the closeness of union by that of husband to wife; but both fall short of what they are used to illustrate.

I am inclined to think that the suspicion with which "mysticism" is regarded by many Protestant theologians is due to the assumption that, in all "mystical" union of man with God, the personal distinction is lost. From the point of view of Christian faith such mysticism in religious practice is parallel to absolute idealism in philosophy and falls under the same condemnation. But a truly Christian mysticism, such as is witnessed to by such words of St. Paul as "I, yet not I but Christ in me," and elsewhere, would not be open to this criticism. The two types need to be carefully distinguished. On this see *Amor Dei*, by John Burnaby (London, 1939).

have come into existence as individualised centres of conscious purposive activity associated with certain organisms in the physical universe. Now if the physical universe were to be thought of as the bodily life or conduct of which God is the subject (after the manner of the analogy suggested by Dr. Temple, which we have considered and rejected), we should be individualisations of the one divine life, and the note of personal distinctiveness would be lost. We must ascribe to the physical universe from which we spring the same "otherness" in relation to God of which we are conscious in our personal relationship to God in Christ.

It follows that we must begin by thinking of the relation of God to the sub-human physical universe as a one-sided personal relation, after the analogy of potter and clay rather than of soul and body or person and conduct. We know ourselves to be God's creatures, called, redeemed and adopted into fellowship with Him. That is our primary certainty, and the creation to which we belong is for us primarily the object of God's activity rather than the means of His self-expression. Whatever truth may be contained in the phrase "divine immanence," it must not be allowed to obscure this fact.

But what truth is this phrase intended to convey? It grew in popularity during the nineteenth century by reaction against the deism of the eighteenth. The background of this thought was the conception of the physical universe as a vast machine, a closed system of matter in motion moving according to rigid laws, a kind of cosmic clockwork. The deistic use of the potter and clay analogy produced the notion of God as of a celestial clockmaker who had made the machinery and set it in motion, henceforward only interfering with it from time to time to regulate or repair it by acts called miracles. The inadequacy of this picture became apparent. It was clear that the relation of God to the natural processes was more continuous and intimate than it allowed for. But in the swinging pendulum of thought the doctrine of divine immanence was carried to such extremes that the new picture became no less

misleading than the old. I remember once hearing a man try to argue for what he called a theistic view of the universe by the following flight of fancy. Imagine, he said, an insect crawling and hopping about the body of a man. It might investigate separately toes and fingers, chest and nose and hair without ever realising that these are all connected through being different members of the one live organism. So we, like the insect, investigate this earth and the heavenly bodies without realising that they are all connected as members of the body of which God is the soul. Here, the universe, including ourselves, is the organ of God's self-expression. We are not so much God's creatures, the objects of His redeeming love, as the organs of God's finite conscious experience. We are not called to communion with God in a mutual personal relationship, but to the realisation and expression of the divine life within us.

The constant endeavour of those Christians who are absolute idealists is to deny this antithesis, to show that we can be and are both the objects of God's redeeming love and the organs of His finite experience. The underlying reason for this is the conviction that the logical canon of self-consistency is satisfied by this conception of the ultimate reality as divine self-expression.¹ But does it equally satisfy the canon of self-authenticating goodness? Why should God need thus to express Himself through finite centres of conscious experience in order to be what He is? No answer is given. The question is dismissed as one to which it is unreasonable for finite minds to expect to be able to find an answer.

So this way of picturing divine immanence does not only contradict the witness of faith; it also fails to satisfy the demands of philosophy. At the best it gives us a logically self-consistent deity, who, so far from justifying His manner of existence by its inherent goodness, leaves us wondering why on earth or in heaven He should thus express Himself.

¹ Hence, F. H. Bradley conclusively dismisses the communion aspect as "appearance" contrasted with the "reality" of the expression aspect. Bosanquet and Dr. Temple attempt to maintain both in a synthesis.

And this at the cost of explaining away as “appearance” or “illusion” the most brutal of the brute facts of our experience which our philosophy sets out to interpret.

Surely the field is open for a fresh attempt to be made from the starting-point of faith. We may take it that the deistic way of applying the potter-clay analogy is inadequate. We must try to find some way of conceiving the relation of God to His creation which shall be more continuous and intimate than the deists held, without assuming the only alternative to be such immanence as absolute idealism teaches. Our aim will be to interpret the universe in the light of the Christian revelation, guided by the philosophical canons of logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness.

III

Our clue to the understanding of the universe is our conviction that we are God's creatures made for a life of personal communion with Him and with one another. To use this conviction as a clue means to regard it as giving its meaning to all the content of our observation and experience. Suppose, for example, you see someone behave in a nervous, hesitating manner, and then suddenly burst out in a rather startling piece of self-assertion. You will probably say “He has an inferiority complex.” Now that may or may not be true in the particular case, but even if it is, it will not be explaining the event in the sense of giving its ultimate meaning. To accept it as that would mean to be satisfied by treating a person's individual activity as an instance of a system of impersonal things called complexes.¹ But if you begin by saying that what gives meaning to human life is that we are all made for communion with God in Christ, then you look at the matter the other way round. The meaning of that character which alternates between nervous hesitation and blatant self-assertiveness is that here is a character which in Christ can find freedom from its fears

¹ See above, p. 23.

and growth in strength and graciousness. The meaning of that psychological system of complexes is that here is the raw material of a soul which in communion with God through Christ can be brought to perfection. Psychological knowledge is insight into God's method of creating souls for eternal life. The meaning of all the natural world which is studied by the sciences is that it is the raw material for the creation of the city of God, and whenever and wherever by increasing knowledge of its habits we increase our powers of control over it, we increase our capacity for drawing out its latent possibilities of goodness and beauty.

If this conviction, used in this way as our clue to the meaning of everything, is to justify itself philosophically, it must survive a twofold test. First it must point to a reality which is both logically self-consistent and self-authenticating in goodness, and, secondly, it must approve itself as relevant to the actual universe of our observation and experience, it must interpret this without ignoring, distorting, or explaining away any element in it.

With regard to the first of these tests, surely at least this much can be said. If it were not for the existence of this temporo-spatial universe, there would be no philosophical difficulty in conceiving the existence of God as an eternal perfect Being, perfect in His logical self-consistency and in His self-authenticating goodness. The difficulty arises when we try to account for the existence of creation. To postulate, after the manner of absolute idealism, a necessity for the eternal Being to realise and express Himself through a multitude of finite consciousnesses, is a desperate expedient which can only be described as an attempt to explain *obscurum per obscurius*. There is nothing in the nature of eternal perfection itself which we can claim as necessitating any such self-expression or self-realisation. But surely the case is different if we think of the eternal Being as willing to call into existence, to create, a community of individual persons who shall share in the perfection of His own life. We cannot, indeed, claim to prove any *necessity* that He should do this. In my opinion, philosophy goes beyond the

limits both of its task and of its capacity whenever it attempts to do this. It is not our task to prescribe what God must do in order to be what He is, but to try to show that what we believe Him to have done is consistent with His being that perfection in which both faith and philosophy find their resting-place.¹ Now, if God be perfect in goodness, we postulate nothing inconsistent with that perfection if we think of Him as willing to create this community of persons.

What hinders us from being content with this is the persistence of the illusion that some impersonal necessity of being is more logically self-consistent, more philosophically satisfying as an ultimate principle than an activity of conscious purposive will. The disastrous cleavage between faith and philosophy, with which we are so often confronted, is due to the tacit acquiescence in this illusion on the part of both. When it is seen to be open to criticism, not only on the ground that it renders philosophy repugnant to faith, but also on grounds of philosophical principle, then there comes into view the possibility of a healing of the breach.

Secondly, the conviction that the witness of faith gives the clue to the understanding of the universe must stand the test of asking whether it can interpret the actual facts of our experience and observation without ignoring, distorting, or explaining them away. What can we say here?

We have seen that when studied empirically the universe presents the appearance of a spatio-temporal process, a one-way process moving through time from past to future. At bottom it seems to be of the nature of energy, of energy which in the process of time gets knotted up into what we call "things," and to have the appearance of solid matter. The energy knotted up in these things gets knotted in greater and greater complexity, and, when certain forms of

¹ This is what I believe Mr. Brabant to mean in his essay in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, when he speaks of Christianity providing a "moral" and not a "metaphysical" ground for creation. If so, I am in agreement with him, though I should not myself use his terminology. It is for this reason that I cannot follow Dr. Temple in his argument on pp. 440 ff. of *Nature, Man and God*.

organisation are reached, some of the things become individual centres of feeling, willing and thinking. At the earlier stages, each single thing only moves as it is moved by the ebb and flow of the underlying energy working through it. As individuals, the things are passive, moved hither and thither willy-nilly in the stream of energy. But as the powers of feeling and thinking develop in the more complicated organisms, so there develops a power of acting on their own initiative, a power of acting in order to fulfil some consciously formed purpose. Acts of this kind are events totally different from those movements of things which are due to passive conformity to the habits of the underlying stream of energy. The specifically human stage of development is reached when there is a race of beings capable as *individuals* of such conscious, purposive activity.

At this stage man seeks, not only to act, but also to know and to understand. Science and philosophy come into existence. So we have men and women as members of the universe, offspring of the one process, contemplating it and seeking to express themselves within it. At first it seems most encouragingly responsive to their efforts. There is a coherence and orderliness about it which enables scientific knowledge and control of it to grow apace. But when this study is pressed so far as to seek to discover the secret of its inmost nature, then it seems to slip through our hands and elude us. The conception of the universe as a one-way process, so that the time-factor becomes an element to be considered in describing any occurrence, makes it impossible any longer to regard "natural laws" as generalisations in a uniform system wherein the same cause or combination of causes is always followed by the same effect. The uniformities observable in the behaviour of things of a certain degree of complexity do not seem to obtain among smaller units of what we call matter. Are any of our scientific experiments anything more than the observation of pointer-readings recording our observation of measuring instruments devised by ourselves to give us back the figures we have put into them? Are we to substitute for the absolute

idealism of our immediate ancestors either a neo-Berkleian subjective idealism or a neo-Kantian scepticism concerning the true nature of the sensible universe?

These are typical problems and open questions of to-day in the world of secular thought, and the universe which gives rise to them is the actual universe which is to be interpreted by our Christian philosophy. I submit that this Christian philosophy gives the one hypothesis on which there is a reasonable probability of all the facts observed by scientific study falling into place in an intelligible scheme. If the ultimate truth about the nature of the physical universe be that it is created by God to be the raw material for the further creation of a community of persons whose perfection is to be their life of personal communion with Himself, then we can understand what otherwise seems unintelligible.

Some of the more serious problems which must be faced in the attempt to substantiate this claim will form the subject of the next chapter. I will conclude this one by briefly calling attention to four points which may help to make more clear the position that I wish to maintain.

(1) Is the stream of energy, which constitutes the underlying spatio-temporal reality of the universal process, to be thought of as "spiritual" or "material"? This question cannot be answered without defining the two terms. I propose to define "spiritual" as "intelligently purposive," and "material" as "passively functioning without awareness of the purposive meaning of the activity." It is then clear that this energy is to be thought of as material until it is knotted up into organisms of that complexity in which it becomes the seat of conscious, purposive intelligence.

At what precise stage the material organism becomes the seat of spiritual activity is an empirical question to which it is impossible to give an answer. In all processes of growth we are confronted with a similar difficulty. Who can say at what precise stage child passes into boy, boy into youth, or youth into man? For practical purposes we have to draw lines, as in fixing the age at which licence may be given to

drive an automobile; but no one will pretend that it is possible to detect any appreciable difference in capacity to drive either a month before or a month after the appointed age. There is a continuous process in the course of which there appear real differences of kind. When a new stage is definitely established, it can be compared and contrasted with those which went before, but between the two is a "no man's land" in which one passes over into another.¹ It is therefore irrelevant to our argument to discuss at what stage in sub-human development there first appear traces of purposive activity on the part of individual creatures. That is a proper subject of study for the special science of psychology. The point for us is that, in considering the stages of development in the one-way process which is the created universe, we see in man the stage at which the material organism has become the seat of spiritual life.

(2) How is this possible? We have rejected the notion that the material universe, the stream of energy, is as it were the bodily life of an immanent spiritual God who comes to self-consciousness in and through the consciousnesses of individual men and women. Still further from our thought is any pan-psychist theory according to which every natural object is the seat of a distinct spiritual soul. It remains that we think of the fundamental stream of energy as created by God to be material, and as such to be the raw material for the further creation of men and women as spiritual beings. We do not think of God as lying asleep within the stream of energy, waiting to wake up in the consciousnesses of men and women, but as having given to the stream of energy such habits as will enable it to become knotted up into organisms which shall become the seats of spiritual life. His control of the whole process is continuous and intimate, and every fresh development in the course of what we call evolution is due to His communicating from the richness of His own being some new capacity to the more highly organised matter. But it is the continuous

¹ On this see A. S. Pringle-Pattison: *The Idea of God* (Oxford, 1917), Lecture V.

and intimate control of one who is throughout the transcendent Creator of the whole process, who is giving it what it needs in order to develop in accordance with His purpose to create a community of individual spiritual souls to find their perfection in communion with Himself.

(3) But what then becomes of the uniformity and orderliness of nature, which are the presuppositions of scientific and philosophical study? The answer is surely this. To regard every event in the natural world as under the continuous and intimate control of its transcendent Creator will only imply a disorderly and "chancy" world if the Creator is thought of as capricious and "chancy" in His exercise of it. But we have rejected any such conception of God. God has revealed Himself to us as aiming at the creation of a community of persons for communion with Himself. We shall see in the next chapter that this purpose has involved the creation of an orderly universe in which we can grow to our measure and stature as men by learning to understand and have a hand in controlling it. The ground of the orderliness in nature is God's unchanging purpose, and His will that we should learn by scientific method to know its habits and increase our control over it. To demand anything further is to fall back into the error of imagining that some impersonal system of necessities would provide a more intelligible kind of ultimate reality than is provided by the purposive activity of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

(4) This last consideration suggests another. We have seen that one of the unsolved problems of secular thought is provided by the fact that when we try to study the universe by scientific method, for a while it seems to respond encouragingly to our inquiries, but when we push these inquiries further in an attempt to grasp its fundamental nature, it seems to slip through our fingers and elude us. It is, I believe, true to say that so far as we are seeking to know enough about it to be able to control it, it is responsive to us. It is when we seek to answer the question of what it is in itself, that we are baffled. In this chapter we have

approached the study of the universe from the point of view of the witness of faith, and have been led to hold that it is the raw material for the creation of persons, who grow into their personality by learning to understand and control it. Whether in God's purpose the ultimate secrets of its constitution are always to remain a baffling mystery to finite intelligence is a question we cannot answer. Time alone will show. But at least we may claim that our interpretation of the actual universe does at this point march in step with the results of our observation and experience. Faith teaches that the universe has that uniformity and orderliness which is necessary for us to learn to control it; science and philosophy report that so much orderliness can be discovered in it, but that beyond there lies mystery.

CHAPTER X

GOD AND MAN

I

I HAVE spoken of this universe as a one-way process in space and time. But what are space and time? Or should we say: what is space-time? The discussion of these questions lies outside the scope of our present inquiry. They are part of the proper task of philosophy, which must continue to wrestle with them, even though the result be to discover that the final answer lies in that realm of mystery which is beyond man's understanding on earth. Here we are only concerned with asking what we may learn from the philosophy of to-day that will deepen our understanding of the witness of our faith. With this purpose in view I will content myself with making three reflections on the subject of time.

In a lecture delivered at Oxford M. Bergson remarked that "Time is that which prevents things from happening together."¹ If time and space be taken in conjunction this is certainly true. No two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. Now each of us comes into existence as the self-consciousness associated with his own particular body: it is as the subject of the experiences mediated by that body that he has his own peculiar "content." But owing to this characteristic of space and time to which M. Bergson has called our attention, no matter how far back I may trace the past history of that physical organism which has woken to consciousness and self-consciousness in me, even if in biblical language I trace it back to "the loins of our father Abraham,"² its track can never at any moment have coincided with that of any other man's. Does not this suggest to us, who view the universe from the point

¹ Quoted by F. H. Brabant in Rawlinson, *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, p. 347.

² Heb. vii. 5.

of view of our Christian faith, that space and time are God's machinery for the creation of individual souls? The universe is an individualising process, and has this function precisely in virtue of its spatio-temporal character. Viewed in this way, the universe of our experience and observation lends support to our hope of individual, personal immortality. It would surely be unreasonable for a universe which is so essentially an individualising process to end in the destruction of that which through so many ages it has laboured to produce.

My second reflection is concerned with the well-known statement of St. Augustine that God created time along with the universe.¹ Now, as Kant and his followers so often remind us, we can neither think of time as having had a beginning or as having had no beginning, and if we read St. Augustine with this problem in view, I think we must confess that, though his words may be true, we do not know what they mean. But there is another connection in which they seem to me very suggestive. If the universe be the process through which God is creating individual souls, and space and time be the individualising machinery, then we do mean something when we speak of them as elements in God's creation which He has called into being for the fulfilment of His purpose. Like the rest of the physical universe, they are intelligible to the extent that is necessary to enable us to make use of them in the direction of our lives, but the ultimate secret of their constitution is beyond us.²

¹ *De Civ. Dei*, XI, vi.

² The fact that we can neither think of time as beginning or not beginning was used by Kant and his followers to prove that it is unintelligible and must, therefore, be regarded as a form of our subjective experiencing and not as an element in objective reality. But, if I have rightly followed the course of recent studies in the physical sciences, this difficulty is now seen to be characteristic not of space and time alone, but of all the factors which enter into the constitution of the physical universe. Whilst we can grasp the "knots" into which the fundamental energy is organised, and so mould and shape the world of our experience, we are baffled when we attempt to understand the nature of its component elements. This is what leads Professor Eddington, for example, to follow Kant into subjective idealism. But what then becomes of ourselves, who, as individual centres of consciousness, come into existence as incidents in the history of the unreal universe?

From this point of view we can perhaps get some light on the problem of the difference between relative and absolute measures of time. It is obvious that the measures of our "clock-time" (to use Bergson's phrase) are relative; they are utilitarian devices for the use of time in accordance with our finite purposes. But what is the absolute measure of time? I suggest that it is the measure of the time required for the fulfilment of the divine creative purpose.

An analogy may help to make clear what is meant. Consider a musician composing a symphony. For the adequate expression of his theme he will require an orchestra to spend a certain amount of time in playing it. If it needs forty-five minutes, it must have forty-five minutes. The words "forty-five minutes" denote a measure of clock-time; but the words "the time required for the performance of the symphony" denote a different measure, one in which qualitative rather than quantitative considerations are uppermost. It is in this kind of measure that we find the closest analogy to what we mean by the absolute measure of time. How long it will take for God's purpose in creation to be fulfilled we do not know, but it seems to me that St. Augustine's statement has an intelligible meaning when it is considered in the light of this analogy. It is possible that the length of time which will be required is not fixed; it may depend on the use which we make of the freedom God has given us. But as the Creator of the universe God does not have to fit His composition into an already existent temporal order; He goes on making time as it is required and puts it forth to be the medium of the universal process until that process is complete.

In thus following St. Augustine we ally ourselves, so far as modern thinkers are concerned, with Alexander as against both Kantians and Absolute Idealists. We do not think of time and space either as forms of our individual subjective experience, or as forms of the divine experience, but as the form of existence devised by God for His creation.¹ This leads me to my third reflection.

Dr. Alexander's view of the relation of God to the universe is, of course,

Christian philosophy is frankly teleological. It seeks to interpret the universe by referring the actual objects of our experience and observation to God's purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ, His Word. We ask then, of time and space, what function they perform. I have already called attention to one point, their usefulness as an individualising device, and now I want to consider the hypothesis that they are created by God to provide a form of existence in which there can occur genuine contingency.

According to the Christian revelation God's purpose is the creation of a community of free beings to find their perfection in communion with Himself. At the risk of being tedious it is necessary to emphasise once again that this is a purpose entirely different from any supposed intention on the part of God Himself to experience life in and through finite centres of consciousness. It is characteristic of absolute idealism, and of all philosophies which are akin to it in thus regarding creation as a mode of God's self-expression, that they have no place for genuine contingency, for events which might have been other than they are, for a "freedom of indifference." For all such systems the triumph of philosophy is the achievement of a point of view from which events which appear to us to be of this nature are seen in the last resort not really to have been so. The apparent irrationalities in the world of our spatio-temporal experience are to be resolved by being thought away.

But the case is altered when we think of God as willing to create a community of individual free beings. We think of Him as devising and creating a universe in which they

quite different from that maintained in this book. Where I find myself in agreement with him, and greatly indebted to him, is in his exposition of the thesis that empirical analysis of the physical universe discovers space and time to be of the essence of its mode of existence. I must confess that his ultimate derivation of all the universe from space-time as, so to speak, the *primaeval* stuff of which all things are made, passes beyond my comprehension; it seems to me to require detailed knowledge in that realm of mystery where all is speculation. But, without going so far as that, I am convinced that he is right in regarding space and time as the form of the existence of things, and therefore as real factors in the universe prior (in time) to the existence of ourselves experiencing them.

can grow in freedom as well as in individuality, and this is a universe in which there is genuine contingency, a universe in which there are irrational as well as rational elements.

But, it will be argued, how can there really exist anything irrational, since only that which is rational can be intelligible and thus satisfy the philosophical criterion of logical self-consistency? I reply that there is one connection in which our experience shows this to be conceivable, and that is when we think in terms of purpose and postulate an element of irrationality deliberately willed as a means to the fulfilment of a rational purpose. When, for example, we wish to devise a fair and just method of deciding which side shall have the first move in a game, we deliberately invent conditions which leave the decision to chance. We have experience of one kind of chance as really existing, and of one kind only, and that is deliberately willed chance.

Let us suppose, then, that a universe in which there is an element of genuine contingency is a necessary condition for the creation of individual free beings, and that God has willed to create this contingency as we will to create the conditions that leave a decision to chance. This means that he has willed to create a universe such that irrationalities can really exist in it. I suggest that space and time are created by God to be the conditions in which a universal process of this kind can proceed on its way.

It is because the irrational is created to be a means toward the fulfilment of a rational purpose that the Creator retains his logical self-consistency. But self-authenticating goodness is also a necessary criterion, and philosophy will not be satisfied with a universe which is logically intelligible as the process through which finite free individuals are created unless it satisfy this other criterion as well. In the Christian philosophy this is secured by holding that the end of the process is the creation of finite individuals who themselves are not merely free, but good. But just as contingency is the necessary condition of their growth in freedom, so that deeper form of contingency, the possibility

of their choice of evil, is the necessary condition of their becoming both free and good. We thus have to think of God as creating a process in which there is not merely the irrationality of contingency, but also the further irrationality of the possibility of evil. How this could be done we do not know: it is an open field for speculation.¹ But the fact of its being done is to be accepted as an irrationality which finds its explanation as deliberately willed and created to be a means to the fulfilment of an intelligible purpose.

If this general position be maintained, there follows a consequence of the greatest importance. Contingency and evil are as real as anything else which belongs to the spatio-temporal order, to the process which is our universe. It is one thing to explain away the whole of this universe as illusion or appearance. But having decided against this, we are not free to explain away contingency and evil whilst retaining as real a spatio-temporal process in which God is working out His creative will. God Himself is eternally the ultimate reality, in whose logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness philosophy finds the goal of its quest. But we have to recognise that in the universe of His creation there are irrationalities, elements opaque to thought, unintelligible. They cannot be explained; they must not be explained away. What is to be done about them? The question suggests the answer. It is *doing* and not thinking that is required. The only kind of meaning that can be found in these irrationalities is *meaning for action*. They have to be changed in fact in order to become transparent to thought. This created universe, as it stands to-day, is not intelligible. There are elements in it which have got to be changed before they can be understood.

¹ The last two lectures in Dr. N. P. Williams's *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (London, 1927) would be a type of the kind of speculation I have in mind.

II

God, the eternal self-existent source and ground of all things, is intelligible through and through, being perfect goodness. Willing to create a community of finite individuals to find their perfection in personal communion with Himself, He begins by calling into existence an order of space and time embodied in a stream of energy, energy which is material in the sense that it has no will or purpose of its own but behaves according to the habits given to it by its Creator. It is the constant object of His care and attention, and from time to time, as it becomes knotted up into organisms of increasing complexity, He enriches it with fresh qualities. Real differences of kind appear in the course of the continuous process. There comes a time when one of these differences takes the form of a power of spontaneous action according to individual choice.

So long as everything in the universe was passively conforming to the Creator's will there was nothing irrational or unintelligible about it. Nor will there be anything irrational or unintelligible about the perfected community of individual persons, when their wills are one with the all-good will of God, and their freedom exercised accordingly. But in order that it may be their freedom, and theirs as individuals, He deliberately gives them an irrational power of choice, and this in a world in which they have to choose not only between different objects of desire but also between good and evil.

That we can and do choose evil, knowing it to be evil, is a fact of experience not to be explained away. This is often denied, and it is argued that we can only act from choice of what seems good to us at the moment.¹ But this is because of the underlying assumption that in this universe of space and time, as well as in eternity, nothing which appears irrational can really be so. I do not wish to assert that we can choose evil because it is evil, but that we can choose what is pleasant in spite of its being evil and in spite of our knowing it to be evil at the moment of choice. "I

¹ *E.g. Temple, Nature, Man and God*, p. 229 and elsewhere.

am going to do this, although I know I ought not to, because I want to so much" is a state of mind which need not be explained away by sophisticated arguments which labour to prove that what it really means is "I am under the temporary illusion that what I want to do will be better for me than that I ought to do." In other words, we can and do really sin.

The stage at which these irrational events and actions can and do occur is thus an intermediate stage in the creative process. It was preceded by the stage at which the material energy conformed passively to the habits imposed upon it by the divine will; it will be succeeded by the stage at which all created wills act freely in perfect harmony with the divine will. Perhaps an illustration may help to make clear what is meant, an illustration suggested by the thought of God as our heavenly Father. Here on earth in our experience the art of parenthood is the art of passing over from control by external compulsion to a partnership in community of aims. At first the child is entirely controlled and moved as though it were a thing with no will of its own: it is lifted up, laid down, undressed, bathed and dressed again as its elders think fit. But from the very start the wise parent is aiming at bringing up his child so as to be able to dispense with external control, and to live his own life in free personal fellowship with himself; and woe betide the parents who delay too long the giving of their children sufficient liberty, even though they use their liberty to make mistakes. There comes a time when advice is more valuable than command, the stage of which Horace wrote "*insuevit pater optimus hoc me, ut fugerem exemplis vitiorum quaeque notando.*"¹ And this leads on to the fellowship of later years.

So this intermediate stage in the creative process is the stage at which God is passing over from control by the imposition of habits of behaviour upon passive material to control by kindling a free response in conscious personal agents.

¹ *Sermones*, I, iv, 105.

I want now to draw attention to three points which emerge when this process is viewed from the human end.

(1) In the course of creation human beings come into existence as conscious purposive agents individualised through being the conscious subjects of their respective material bodies. The bodily organism of each one of us belongs to the physical world, and as such it has no initiative of its own; it conforms passively to the habits of behaviour imposed by God on the material world—what in common parlance we call the “laws of nature.”¹ When, as babies, each one of us was lifted up and laid down, undressed, bathed and dressed again, we had very little individual, personal control over our lives. We were knots in the stream of energy, conforming to its rhythm and habits. But we were knots of that particular type of complexity to which it was God’s will to give the power of free purposive activity, and so in course of time we found ourselves increasingly able to control our bodily behaviour in accordance with our spiritual purposes. In this development we have passed through three stages: (i) passively and unconsciously our bodies have obtained and assimilated whatever was necessary to their health and comfort; (ii) we have become conscious of these bodily needs, and made the satisfaction of them a matter of our purposive activity; and (iii) we have become aware of the existence of ideals which we cannot treat merely as means towards the satisfaction of our own desires or needs but must recognise as having a claim upon us. We reach our true manhood when we pass from the life which is lived in the pursuit of the satisfaction of our needs and desires to the life which is devoted to the service of truth, of goodness and of beauty.

(2) The individualising process, which we have seen to be initiated in the creation of material bodies spatio-temporally distinct, is carried on into this our personal develop-

¹ Whilst differing radically from his philosophical and theological conclusions, I should like here to express my indebtedness to Dr. J. S. Haldane for his exposition of the relation between living organisms and their environment in *The Sciences and Philosophy* (London, 1929).

ment, where its perfection lies in its passing over into a contrary movement. A man has to become a self in order that he may devote himself to the service of the ideals which claim his devotion, and in the service of those ideals he returns to a life of harmonious co-operation with his fellow-men. First there is the passive harmony of the herd, wherein each individual member is moved in accordance with the pushes and pulls of the current of herd-life. Then the individual becomes aware of and develops his own individuality and selfhood: his virtue is to stand out against the current of herd-life and take a line of his own. But his selfhood must be surrendered to the service of the ideals: otherwise its development is arrested and it deteriorates.

These counter-movements are not successive stages in human development such that the one ends where the other begins. There is doubtless a stage in the life of a growing child when his assertion of independence is of primary importance and is to be encouraged; but for the most part they run concurrently throughout our life on earth. We are always beset by the two opposing temptations: the temptation to let ourselves "go with the herd" and the temptation to assert our independence as though we were ends unto ourselves.

We shall only attain to the exercise of a freedom which is intelligible through and through when our whole self is freely and entirely surrendered to the service of the ideal. This world of irrational contingency and irrational freedom is the world in which as individuals we can become selves capable of attaining to that perfect freedom.

(3) The creative process is not flowing smoothly forward to its conclusion. The contingency implanted in the universe by God as the condition of finite freedom has been so used that there is actual evil to be reckoned with as a grim reality. There is ignorance, there is suffering and there is sin.

There are five logically possible ways of conceiving the relation between good and evil. It may be held (*a*) that goodness alone is real, while evil is in the last resort to be

explained away as illusion, or appearance; (b) that evil is alone real and goodness to be explained away; (c) that reality is neutral as regards good and evil and the distinction between them is not ultimate; (d) that there is an ultimate eternal dualism of good and evil; or (e) that goodness alone is eternally real, while evil is a reality existing within the spatio-temporal universe by permission of its Creator. Of these positions (b) has been included for the sake of logical completeness; whether it has ever been actually maintained I do not know. All the rest have had, and still have, their adherents. But from much that I have already said it will be clear that I regard the last of them as alone tenable. The fourth, an ultimate dualism, will not satisfy the criteria of logical self-consistency and self-authenticating goodness which we have seen rightly to be demanded of reality by the great tradition in philosophy; the first three, though attractive to philosophers because of their apparent capacity to satisfy these criteria, fail to stand the test of being required to interpret our actual experience without explaining it away. We are left, then, with the fifth, the view that evil is among the irrationalities allowed to exist within the spatio-temporal universe as a means to the fulfilment of the rational purpose of God in creation.¹

When we analyse evil into its three forms of ignorance, pain and sin, we can see, I think, that sin presents the most serious problem of the three.

Ignorance may be a natural consequence of the fact that we come into existence as minds individualized through our bodily inheritance. Each of us looks out upon the universe from the point of view of his own spatio-temporal organism, and can only see things along his own perspective. But human development includes a growing capacity to

¹ This, as will appear shortly, is the view consistent with the witness of Christian faith. Cp. N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, Lecture I; and B. S. Easton, *Christ in the Gospels* (New York, 1930), pp. 136, 137. When it is challenged on account of the difficulties involved in it, the Christian is entitled to ask whether any alternative can be suggested which does not involve even greater difficulties. In this it is similar to the doctrine of creation.

share one another's points of view. Had our growth to perfection gone smoothly straight forward, this temporary limitation would have presented no difficulty to the mind.

Pain presents graver difficulties, so grave indeed that for many people it provides the chief obstacle in the way of belief in God. Nevertheless, that it is not so serious a problem as sin is proved by the very argument used by those whom it impresses most. "How can we believe in God," they ask, "in view of all the pain that is allowed to exist in the world?" Here the pain is viewed as evidence in an argument based on moral considerations; it is the alleged sinfulness of God in allowing the pain to exist which is the ground of disbelief. One might worship a God who suffers, but not a god who sins.

Sin, then, is the heart of the problem; what account are we to give of it? In one sense, no account can be given of it beyond saying that it is the choice of what is wrong because of some desirable quality in it. It is an irrational act, and is therefore incapable of explanation, a surd in the order of reality, opaque to thought, unintelligible. All attempts to give an intelligible account of it explain it away and describe it as something other than what it really is, as is invariably done by philosophers of the school of absolute idealism. As has been said before, they try to cure its irrationality by thinking it away; whereas it must be wrestled with in act before it can be seen through. This universe, being spatio-temporal process, is such that its total condition at any one moment is the raw material of its condition at the next. It is continually undergoing change, and in so far as it is so shaped and moulded as to rationalise irrationalities in it, to that extent it becomes more intelligible.

This is true of all its irrationalities. But when we ask how this moulding and shaping is to be done, we find further evidence to show that the central problem is the problem of sin. As men we are members of the universe, characterised by having a freedom and an intelligence which enables us to take a hand in the moulding and shaping of it. Moreover,

the universe is patient of our efforts; it has an orderliness which enables us to extend our scientific control over it. Bit by bit the evil of ignorance can be dispelled by application to study, and pain can be so used as to make it contribute to the growth of goodness. Were these the only evils in the universe, mankind might conceivably be able to achieve its own perfection by overcoming them. But we can do nothing with sin. We cannot cure ourselves of our love of what is wrong but pleasant; we cannot overcome the weakness of will through which we surrender to it; we are the men who through our sinful acts have increased instead of decreasing the amount of evil in the universe; we cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility for what we have done, or make ourselves fit to share in the personal fellowship of a perfected community. It is we ourselves who need to be reshaped and remoulded, and we cannot do it.

This impotence, moreover, is a characteristic interwoven into the very depths of our being. It is not a sufficient account of the matter to say that sometimes some of us fail. This is a statement which cannot be proved by argument, for the question at issue is not one of logical reasoning but of true or false description of human experience. It is noticeable that those who deny the existence of God and put their faith in the power of man to reshape his world according to his heart's desire inevitably find themselves driven to ignore or explain away this factor of human sinfulness. Meanwhile we continue to pass laws in restraint of those whose avarice would make profit out of war or vice, and seek to draw up international agreements to limit the ravages caused by corporate pride and selfishness. The burden of proof lies on those whose theories would deny the need of any such laws or agreements. We do not have to choose between Christian faith in God and philosophical faith in man: Pelagianism is bad philosophy as well as bad religion.

Here, then, is the situation with which we are faced. The universal process has issued in a race of individuals who have a vision of a perfection which they are unable

to attain to because of their own inability to devote themselves whole-heartedly to the service of what is good. Nor can any revelation in the sense of intellectual enlightenment alone set us free from the chains which bind us. We need to be remade in our inmost being, but yet in a way which shall preserve and develop our individual freedom, for the aim of creation is a fellowship of persons, and persons are free individuals who act of their own volition. A revelation of enlightenment might be adequate to a universe in which evil was at bottom an unreality which could be thought away; but in this universe in which evil is the grim reality we know it to be, the divine Word must be an act of redemptive power.

III

The heart of the Christian gospel is the proclamation of this act of redemption as a fact of history, or, rather, as the central fact of all history. The Church's primary task is not to reason from observation and experience with a view to proclaiming what the Word of God "must be": it is to declare what that Word has been and is. It is to declare that in the history of this world, in the sphere in which sin plays the havoc it does and binds us in chains we cannot loose, God has met and overcome the forces of evil.

This is surely the essential core of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement. That doctrine is eviscerated if the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ are regarded merely as an illustration revealing on the part of God an eternal willingness to suffer as a result of our sins and to forgive them. Doubtless they do reveal those truths, but they do so because the records of them are the records of God actually at work fulfilling His creative purpose by the redemptive activity in which His omnipotence expressed itself as rescuing His creation from the toils of its own sin. The universe is a one-way process, and to His creatures God had given an independence, a freedom; that freedom

had been misused, so that by itself the universe could never produce the community of good individual persons for which it had been brought into existence. But the purposes of God are "without repentance," and He was content neither to destroy His creation unperfected, nor by the application of external force to coerce into conformity with His will those whom He willed to constitute free persons. Hence He actually entered personally into the history of His universe, within that history conquered once for all the powers of evil, and, by offering to us men a share in that victory, made possible our perfection as free beings. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."¹

Through that divine victory forgiveness and hope are made available for us, and we lay hold of them by faith. What is this faith? We have seen that according to the Old Testament man's primary act of faith is to do what he honestly believes to be right and trust God to support him. But if a man sets himself to serve God in this way, he discovers that he cannot do so. No matter how good his resolutions, his pride, his lust, his selfishness prevent him from the exercise of faith. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*. "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." It is thus that the Old Testament, the Law, prepares the way for the New Testament, the Gospel, for only when a man has discovered his own impotence and has learned to say "I ought, but I cannot," will his ears be opened to hear the word of God in Christ which says, "Yes, you can."

To such a one the first word of the Gospel is the good news that the powers of evil before which he is impotent have been overcome. Christ in His manhood has been faithful even unto the death on the cross, and has risen victorious. At first that message, by its revelation of the gulf between the perfection of the Saviour's human faith and

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19. It would clearly be absurd to attempt any detailed study of the doctrine of the Atonement in a subsection of one lecture in this course. For the view of it underlying what I have said, I may perhaps refer to chapter v of my *And Was Made Man*. See also G. Aulen, *Christus Victor* (English translation, London, 1931).

his own impotence, may seem to bring despair rather than hope. Only now does he realise how deeply he falls below what he ought to be. But this first word, the message of Christ's victory, is followed by another. If he will give up trying to save himself, will acknowledge his sinfulness and impotence and surrender himself to the Lord who has come on earth to seek him out and die for him, then his sinfulness will be forgiven and in place of his impotence he will be given a share in the victorious power of his risen Lord, who says to him: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."¹

So the Christian faith, which lays hold on forgiveness and hope, is now seen to be something much richer and deeper than that first beginning of faith which consisted in the attempt to trust God for support in fidelity to the claims of conscience. It includes acknowledgement of sinfulness and impotence, and self-surrender to Christ. We must now try to see the place of the Atonement in our Christian philosophy.

Sufficient has been said to show why it holds the central place in the system. According to the system the universe expresses the creative purpose of God, and God is perfect in power, wisdom, goodness and love. The power, the wisdom, the goodness and the love of God are all challenged by the evil in the world. Why, in face of this evil and in spite of it, do we believe in this God of infinite perfection, and in His purpose to create a community of individuals for free personal communion with Himself? It is because we find among the facts of the history of this world, among the facts which it is the duty of philosophy to try to understand and interpret, the life, death and resurrection of Christ and the establishment among men of that new life of communion with God in Christ which springs from His victory and their forgiveness and reconciliation. The story is the story of God incarnate, actually wrestling with and overcoming the power of evil to corrupt His creation, of God

¹ John xv. 5.

manifesting His omnipotence, His wisdom, His goodness and His love by a method which does not destroy but restores to man his hope of perfect freedom. It is not too much to say that it is this divine redemptive activity which opens our eyes to the meaning of everything else.

IV

•The proclamation of this divine redemptive activity as a fact of history, and the urging of men to repent and receive the forgiveness and new life made available by it, form the heart of the message which the Christian Church exists to declare, of the preaching of the Word of God. The attempt to interpret everything else in the light of it is the task of Christian philosophy. I propose to conclude this book by emphasising the importance of distinguishing the two, and suggesting that while agreement as to the Word to be preached is essential to the unity of the Church, that unity need not be broken by wide differences of view concerning deductions drawn from it in the course of philosophising. Doubtless, the distinction will not in practice be found an easy one to draw. It would be foolishly over-optimistic to imagine that this aspect of the problem of disunity could be solved in five minutes by the adoption of a formula; for even if the drawing of this distinction provides the formula required, much discussion concerning its application will be necessary before we can hope to see unity achieved. But I will try to explain what I mean by some illustrations drawn from topics upon which I have already touched.

The question of the historical origin of evil seems to me to be an open field for speculation. As Christian believers we must be united in holding that the world is God's world, infected by evil but redeemed by God in Christ. But whilst united in this faith, some of us may think that this infection is due to the machinations of evil spirits, others may trace it to the fall of the world-soul, others may have other theories or may prefer to keep an open mind on the subject.

It does not seem to me that agreement here is necessary to unity in Christian faith.

Again, we may differ in our opinions concerning the effect of Christ's redemptive activity on creation as a whole. Of recent years certain European theologians, both in the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions, have advocated what is called an "eschatological" view, according to which the sphere of redemption is limited to those human beings who as individuals are rescued from the corruption of this evil world to find their perfection as members of the redeemed community in heaven. In extreme forms of this view it is maintained that the Church has no concern with such matters as social betterment. The world, and with it human earthly society, lies under God's judgment and is doomed to destruction. I do not myself hold this view. I believe that the divine redemption, which begins by redeeming man at the top of creation, is meant to extend downwards through the continued activity of Christ in His body the Church in a progressive overcoming of evil wherever it still has a foothold, and a cleansing of creation from its infection. But none of us knows what is to be the historical end of this spatio-temporal universe, any more than any of us knows the circumstances of its historical beginning. Meanwhile I suggest that difference of opinion on this point is no sufficient ground for refusing to live and worship together in the unity of one Church with one faith in God's Word.

Connected with this question but not identical with it is that of the extent to which salvation through the cross is offered to and received by men. I have already expressed the opinion that an undue preoccupation with soteriology has often led men to assume an "ark-theory" of the Church which I regard as untenable. As a consequence of this theory it is often held that the line between those who are and those who are not saved by the cross is identical with that between those who are and those who are not members of the Church. I do not myself believe this. I believe in the Atonement as an act once for all objectively accom-

plished by God in Christ whereby forgiveness and salvation are made available for men; I believe that the line between those who are not and those who are in the way of salvation is the line between those whose lives are spent in the satisfaction of their own earthly desires and those whose lives are devoted to the claims made upon them by God under the forms of goodness, truth, or beauty; I believe that wherever there are such lives as these last mentioned, they are due to the working in them of the spirit of Christ, even though those who are living them are completely unaware of the fact and may regard themselves as enemies of Christianity; I believe that thousands of men and women will wake up in the next world to discover that they have been serving God unawares in this world, and unknown to themselves have been saved by virtue of the victory won by Christ upon the cross. To my mind the conscious faith in Christ which it is the privilege of the professing Christian to enjoy does not mark him off as more advantageously placed with regard to eternity than those who do not enjoy it; it enables him to recognise and interpret the unconscious faith of those whose eyes have not been opened to their true condition. These are my beliefs, but they are beliefs which come to me as deductions from faith in the divine redemptive activity in Christ, and deductions which many good Christians do not draw. There is surely no reason why we should not be united as members of one Church on the ground of our common faith while differing about the deductions we draw from it. Even in a reunited Christendom there must surely be a field wherein theologians may differ, unless reunion is to condemn those whose vocation is theology to lives of intolerable dullness.

Lastly I may refer to the question whether there would have been an incarnation of God in Christ whether or not there had been need of a remedy for sin, and to the question raised by my Lutheran friend whether or not the universe was created in order to be redeemed. These, again, are surely legitimate questions for discussion among theologians united in the common faith that this actual universe has

become subject to sin and has needed and received the redemption wrought by God in Christ. The acceptance or rejection of either view should not be erected into an *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*.

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